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DELIGHTFUL DODD



by

ELLIOTT FLOWER

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Gift of The People of the United States
Through the Victory Book Campaign
(A. L. A. — A. R. C. — U. S. C.)
To the Armed Forces and Merchant Marine





DELIGHTFUL DODD

Sarah H. Joslin

By the same author

THE SPOILSMEN

BY

ELLIOTT FLOWER



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DANIEL DODD.

DELIGHTFUL

❖ ❖ DODD ❖ ❖

By ELLIOTT FLOWER

AUTHOR OF "THE SPOILSMEN," ETC.

Illustrated by

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DELIGHTFUL DODD

CHAPTER I.

READY AND RE- SOURCEFUL



A YOUNG woman — quiet, self - possessed, with the air of one who was accustomed to think and act for herself — stepped from the kitchen door of the farmhouse and walked

briskly toward the barn. In the well-worn path she met a man, moving with the deliberate stride of weight and strength in the direction of the house.

“Can you get me to the 9.20 train?” she asked.

He looked at her, and then at a big silver watch that he carried.

“Be ready in five minutes,” he said.

Neither hurried, but neither lost any time. His favourite horse already had the harness on, and he had only to bring it out and hitch it to the side-bar buggy. She went to her room, put a few

things in a little valise, and was ready when he drove up to the horse-block at the lane gate. A moment later they were speeding down the country road.

"If the train's on time," he remarked, "I'm afraid we won't make it, but it's generally late."

"We must make it," she said.

"What's wrong?" he asked.

"Gracie's husband is dead," she replied. "I am going to her."

He touched the horse with the whip and the spirited animal responded with a burst of speed.

"I knew it was something serious," he commented, "or you wouldn't have tried to make this train. Somehow there's always a reason for anything you ask, and you don't have to chase around like a chicken with its head off to make a fellow understand it. Some girls would have had hysterics first and thought about the train afterward."

"Some men," she returned, quietly, "would have wasted time with questions instead of getting the horse."

"Oh, well, I know *you*," he said, as if that settled the whole question. "When you speak in that quiet, earnest way, it means something. You know what you want to do and the reason why, and it's generally the best thing to do — always, I guess."

"Not always," she corrected.

"Well, anyway, I don't stop to ask any questions when you want a thing done in a hurry."

"That's why I go to you," she said. "We understand each other."

It was, indeed, the understanding that comes from the association of two capable people. Jessie Marsden had lived under the same roof with her cousin, Sam Carroll, ever since the death of her mother several years before, and she had proved herself to be a woman of quiet firmness, quick perception, and excellent judgment. "She thinks like a man," Sam had once said of her, in a burst of admiration, but, while there was something of truth in the expression, it gave a false impression, for there was nothing masculine about her. In appearance she was a pleasing young woman of about twenty-two years, with natural graces of mind and person that had been further developed by excellent educational advantages. She was sincere, unassuming, resourceful, and her aunt, with whom she had lived since the death of her mother, had learned to depend upon her in many ways, — so many, in fact, that she discouraged any suggestion of going back to the city. So Jessie, having a very trifling income of her own, and lacking the expertness in any line that would enable her to earn her own

living (except possibly as a school-teacher), had made the best of a situation that could not, in the very nature of things, be particularly agreeable to her.

Sam Carroll admired her as a brother might admire her. He was big, good-natured, easy-going, as a general thing, and he liked her air of quiet self-possession and confidence. Never aggressive, never anything but womanly, she nevertheless gave one an impression of reserve force and readiness; and he was like her in one thing, and one thing only: he would think and act quickly, although never hurriedly, when occasion required. Under the same circumstances, no other two would have been on their way to town so soon after the receipt of the news that led her to make the trip. As it was, even he — big, blundering man — could not fail to appreciate the mental readiness that led her to start as few women would think possible. She had only a little hand-bag.

“How about your trunk?” he asked.

“I asked Jane to pack it, and you’ll have to forward it,” she replied. “I suppose,” whimsically, “she’ll leave out half the things I want, and scatter some of my most cherished possessions, but — I couldn’t wait for a trunk after I got that telegram. I barely had time to slip into a decent gown.”

"You're all right in any gown," he asserted, thus unconsciously paying a tribute to the neatness that was one of her most pleasing characteristics, — neatness without irritating preciseness.

At the station they found that the train was fifteen minutes late. It ought to reach the Junction eight minutes ahead of the through train, with which it aimed to make connections, but it promised to be seven minutes behind it.

"Will they wait for us?" she asked.

"Not over two minutes," replied the station-agent.

"See here, Bill," put in Sam, with the familiarity of an old acquaintance, "can't you fix it for us?"

"Trains ain't held on my orders," returned the agent.

"But I must get that train," she urged. "Isn't there any way to do it? It is very important."

Whatever a woman wants is "very important" in most cases, and men who have constant dealings with the sex are not easily impressed, but, after a moment of hesitation, the agent turned to his telegraph-key.

"I'll see what I can do, Miss Marsden," he said. Presently he turned back to her.

"I made it a personal matter with Tom over at the Junction," he explained, "and he's pretty sure

he can get the conductor to hold the train five minutes, if I get word to him that your train won't be any later than that. They don't usually bother much about this one-horse branch."

"Thank you," she said.

"I'm glad to do it for you," he assured her. Most men were glad to do what they could for Jessie Marsden, not, as is often the case, because of any appearance of helplessness, but because of her quick and sincere appreciation of favours done and her unaggressive self-reliance. The rational woman, whose self-reliance is not so irritatingly prominent as to savour of egotism, is the happy medium between the one who is unreasonable in her flurried dependence and the one who is unreasonable in her strong-minded independence. Jessie resembled neither of these, and in consequence her earnestness led the agent, who knew her, to do his utmost in her behalf.

"Wire him that we'll make it," said the engineer; and, with the incentive of the through train being held five minutes for him, he did make it. Just that spur was needed.

As the train drew into the Junction, Jessie stood on the platform of the car, waiting.

"Don't get off before it stops," cautioned a brakeman.

"I never do," she replied, quietly.

She was on the station platform the moment the train stopped, however, and she crossed quickly to where the conductor of the through train stood, watch in hand.

"No baggage!" came the cry.

"That's a good thing," growled the conductor, as he gave the signal to start.

Jessie settled herself comfortably and tried to read, but her thoughts were busy with her sister. Gracie was two years older, but much more dependent. There had always been some one to take care of her, for she had married just previous to their father's death, and had been spared the troubles that had followed, culminating in the death of their mother. Her husband had been reasonably successful in business until ill health had forced his retirement and sent him to the Peninsula County (Michigan) farm, where he had died; but Jessie feared that he had left practically nothing, and that her sister, in this trying hour, was among comparative strangers. This made it doubly imperative that she should get to her at once. She knew that she had to leave the train at Traverse City, that it was an hour's ride by boat from Traverse City to Neah-tawanta, and that the farm was six or seven miles from the latter place; this much letters had told

her; but she never before had made the trip, and now she was wondering how she could best avoid the possibility of delay.

It was with a feeling of relief that she saw a baggage-transfer man coming down the aisle of the car.

"Is there an afternoon boat to Neahtawanta?" she asked.

"Sure," he answered. "Want to go to the dock?"

"Yes."

"Any baggage?"

"No."

"Twenty-five cents, please," he said, handing her a transfer ticket.

"Is there a livery-stable at Neahtawanta?" she asked.

"Sure. We keep a branch there for the summer-resort business."

"Can I telegraph for a horse and buggy?"

"I'll telephone."

"Thank you. Tell them to have it at the dock, please, when the boat gets in, — for Miss Marsden. I want to get to Daniel Dodd's farm as soon as possible. You won't forget, will you?"

To reassure her he made a memorandum of her instructions before passing on, and he also made the

mental comment, "She's all right," meaning that she lacked the nervous indecision that he found in many women travellers.

There was a wait of half an hour at the Traverse City dock, but there was none whatever at the Neahtawanta dock. A man was waiting there with a horse and buggy, and she had reached it before most of the women passengers had succeeded in gathering together their bundles. Yet she did not seem to hurry as much as the rest of them; it all lay in her directness and readiness — mental as well as physical.

"For Miss Marsden?" she asked.

"Yes," replied the driver.

She gained the seat beside him — an awkward feat for any woman — while he was thinking of jumping out to help her.

"I want to go to Daniel Dodd's farm, and hurry, please," she said. "I am willing to pay something extra for speed."

The details of that trip from farm to farm — uneventful, so far as adventure or serious tribulations are concerned — give a better idea of Jessie Marsden than could be conveyed by any mere description of her. She kept her purpose ever in mind, and she let nothing bewilder or disconcert her.

CHAPTER II.

A "PECULIAR" MAN

DANIEL DODD wandered aimlessly down Cherry Lane, smoking a cigar. Dodd was a city man, transferred to the country by an unexpected combination of circumstances many years before, and he never had lost his city preference for a cigar. Occasionally he might smoke a pipe, but he was usually successful in his efforts to have a few cigars in reserve.

Dodd was a man of medium height and build, with gray hair, a gray beard, a kindly smile, and eyes that were proof of a sense of humour. It was frequently necessary to glance at those eyes or catch a fleeting glimpse of the smile to decide definitely whether it was humour or bitterness that lurked behind some of his remarks. But the humour could always be discerned by any who took the trouble to look for it.

Some of the neighbours said that Dodd was a "peculiar" man, and "peculiar" is a very indefi-

nite and misleading term. It may mean that a man is original or unbalanced or disagreeable, — in fact, anything that differs from the mediocre average of mankind. The man who does not live exactly as we do is "peculiar." The man whose idea of pleasure varies ever so slightly from ours is "peculiar." So is the man whose ambition in life we do not happen to understand, — and the lunatic and the genius. The idea conveyed all depends upon the manner in which the assertion is made. It may bring a shudder or a laugh or make us wish to know the man better.

Dodd was at least harmlessly peculiar. He said strange things and enjoyed himself in strange ways, but he was honest, sympathetic, and generous, so no one said evil of him. Some one who had been over to borrow a churn of him the day before might say to the passing stranger: "Dodd? Dan'l Dodd? Oh, of course, I know him. He means right, but he's jest a leetle peculiar." There would be a tone of condescending pity in this, — a sort of "Too bad!" inflection that was an indication that the man had got the churn. Otherwise, he would say much the same thing in a way that would convey an impression of objectionable or dangerous peculiarity.

And, for the most part, this grew out of the fact

that Dodd could enjoy himself by himself. He did not seek seclusion or spurn the society of his fellows, but he did not need that society for his own enjoyment. He had a mathematical mind, and the farm was full of mathematical problems, if any one took the trouble to look for them. Dodd could sit on the front porch of his house and see whole acres of problems. Nearly everything he saw gave him an idea to elaborate or a problem to solve. He could pick up ideas and problems in the woods, so the woods had many attractions for him; but the neighbours could not understand this view of things, and it naturally followed that Dodd talked little with them. Yet he was a most entertaining conversationalist to any one who could appreciate originality and quaint humour, for he always had something new and surprising to suggest.

Knowing this much of Dodd, no one could have been blamed for surmising that he was estimating the number of cherries on the trees in Cherry Lane, or the cubic feet of smoke that could be produced by one cigar. But, in this instance, his mind was on neither problem, for one of the minor tragedies of life had been enacted under his roof. Edward Congrove had died early that morning, unexpectedly in one sense, but not in another. That he might, and probably would, die suddenly had been

known for some time, but he had not been an invalid in the sense of being confined to his bed, and there was little outward indication that he was fatally afflicted. Consequently, his wife had refused to look upon his death as an immediate probability that would come without further warning. Yet Dodd, being an observing man, and also of an investigating turn of mind, had realized the situation from the beginning, — and also what it meant to him. He had a large place, with one large house and several smaller ones on it, and the people who came there for the summer added materially to an income that was none too large. It was not a place for invalids, and he did not want them. The conditions made association so intimate that a death would "kill the season," and even a serious illness would result in a general depression that would drive people away. In such a place one cannot escape the influences that are unnoticed elsewhere.

Some neighbours of Dodd, not being "peculiar" and open to criticism, would have sent Edward Congrove away, and other neighbours would have said they had done just right. But Dodd, being "peculiar," discussed the matter with his wife, and ended the discussion by saying, "Let him stay." In doing this, he did not minimize the possible cost to himself. On the contrary, he gave that thoughtful

consideration, and then looked at it from another point of view. The doctor, Mrs. Congrove informed him, had said that a restful, quiet summer out-of-doors might prolong his life. Mrs. Congrove, with happy optimism, had interpreted this to mean "*would* prolong his life," but Dodd grasped the significance of the "might."

"It doesn't seem to me," mused Dodd, "that I can put my money against his chance to live a little longer. I think I'd rather lose than feel that I'd won in that kind of a game."

Daniel Dodd certainly was "peculiar." He was beholden to this man in no way; he never had heard of him until the application came for rooms; he never had seen him until the man and his wife arrived; he had nothing to gain and considerable to lose; but he said, "Let him stay!" And another "peculiar" thing about Daniel Dodd was that he was not thinking of the fact that "the season was killed," as he strolled along Cherry Lane; that he had made this sacrifice to no purpose whatever; that he might better have followed the course dictated by business sense, which would have prevented a loss he could ill afford and would have done no harm. Instead, he was thinking of Mrs. Congrove, as he had been since four o'clock that morning, when he started to see if he could get a

telegram through to Mrs. Congrove's sister by telephoning from Old Mission to the operator at Traverse City. He was thinking of her helplessness, and wondering what would, or could, be done for her. She had collapsed so completely that she was utterly incapable of acting or thinking for herself, further than to say, "Wait for Jessie." But it would be another day before Jessie could get there, so Daniel Dodd and his wife had had to assume responsibility in many ways. It was the future, rather than the present, that occupied Dodd, however. He was such a "peculiar" man that he was giving his whole mind to an attempt to solve this young widow's problems for her, for something of her financial circumstances had become known to him. And he was so "peculiar" that he gave no inkling of this, although he heard some talk of her probable predicament from others. Dodd liked to discuss abstract, impersonal questions, but the personal affairs of others were too sacred for idle gossip. So, when Ralph Leonard came to him in Cherry Lane, he became more absorbed than ever in the smoke and the cherries.

"It's been a nice day," remarked Leonard, for want of something better to say.

"Nice for some, bad for others," returned Dodd, sententiously.

"I referred to the weather only," Leonard hastened to explain.

"So did I," said Dodd.

"Well, the weather has been good, hasn't it?" persisted Leonard.

"Depends on your business or your pleasure," replied Dodd. "Good weather for some of us just now would be rainy weather. The crops need it."

"Well, what do you think about it?"

Dodd looked thoughtfully at the sky for a moment.

"I haven't noticed that it makes much difference what kind of weather I prefer," he said at last, "and perhaps it's just as well. If the Lord consulted me, there'd be some other fellow kicking."

Leonard laughed and changed the subject.

"Would you consider it impertinent or indelicate," he said, "if I asked if you knew anything about—er—Mrs. Congrove's financial condition?"

"I don't know that it concerns you," retorted Dodd, with a sharpness that was unusual.

"Now, please don't think so badly of me as that," urged the young man. "There's been some gossip that I've heard, and — er — it's so horrible to think of a woman having financial worries on her mind at such a time! I thought that, if it were true, I might be able to help in some way through you

without her knowing it. I don't know just how, but — well, there's the board. There was some talk on the porch of — ”

“The only way that some people can mind their own business,” interrupted Dodd, “is to pretend that other people's business is theirs. You tell them it's paid, — paid in full to date, and clear into the future as long as she wants to stay here.”

The young man, rather crestfallen, was turning away when Dodd called him back.

“You mean well, but you don't know,” said Dodd. “There's only one way for a man to do a clever and delicate thing right, and that's to get a woman to do it for him. A man may have the right impulses, but he wants to turn the job over to his wife. I guess that's the reason marriage was invented. I'm not saying it's the only reason, but it looks to me like one of them.”

Leonard laughed again. Dodd was always giving him surprises, and it was a relief to know that his motive was really understood.

“It seems to me,” the young man remarked, “that in this particular instance you're doing it as well as a woman.”

“No,” replied Dodd. “Whatever I may be doing or planning to do reveals the usual masculine clumsiness, or you never would have found it out.”

He turned toward the house, as he saw his wife beckoning him from a side door. Mrs. Dodd was very tired and very much distressed.

"I don't know what we're going to do," she said. "She has been at a window for the last hour, watching for her sister. She seems always to have relied on her sister for consolation and counsel."

"She can't get here to-night," returned Dodd. "I'll meet the morning boat at Neahtawanta, but to-night —"

"Listen!" interrupted Mrs. Dodd.

Some vehicle was being driven rapidly along the road, — too rapidly to seem natural in that locality. It turned in at the drive, and they saw a foam-flecked horse, with a young woman and a driver from Neahtawanta in the buggy behind it.

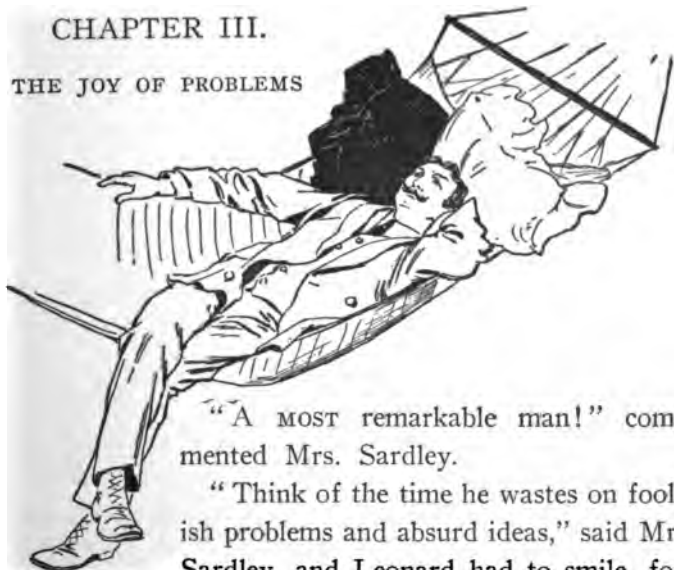
"Well, by thunder!" ejaculated Dodd. "Ain't I old enough yet never to try to say what a woman can't do!"

Mrs. Dodd hurried back to her charge, who turned from the window to say with a weary sigh and smile: "I told you so. You didn't know Jessie, you see."

And Jessie, after nine hours of travel, took immediate charge in her quiet, masterful way, that inspired all with a sense of confidence and relief.

CHAPTER III.

THE JOY OF PROBLEMS



"A MOST remarkable man!" commented Mrs. Sardley.

"Think of the time he wastes on foolish problems and absurd ideas," said Mr. Sardley, and Leonard had to smile, for a hammock and a cigar claimed nine-tenths of all Sardley's time, which surely was not putting it to profitable use.

"Have you told him we are going?" asked Mrs. Sardley.

"Yes," replied Sardley. "He said he understood we had engaged the rooms for the summer, but I told him recent happenings made the associations a little too gloomy for us."

"Did he object?"

"No; but I could see he didn't like it very well."

"I'm sorry for him," remarked Mrs. Sardley, "but I don't see why we should spoil our summer on his account. Are you going to stay, Miss Winton?"

"Oh, yes; now that it's all over and they've gone," replied Miss Winton. "If they were coming back, it would be different."

"From what is known of his affairs in the city," put in Mr. Sardley, "I don't believe he left money enough to enable them to come back, and I don't understand that the sister has anything."

Before anything could be added to the gossip, Daniel Dodd came around the corner of the house.

"Dodd," exclaimed Sardley, with patronizing geniality, "we were just talking about you, and I made a wager that, with your penchant for figures, you had already discovered the dimensions of that big maple that's the pride of your place."

Dodd gave the tree thoughtful and speculative scrutiny, while Sardley winked at the others. The tree was a magnificent specimen, and it was well known that Dodd took great pride in it.

"It seems to me," said Dodd at last, as if trying desperately to recall something, "it seems to me that some boy that was up here about ten years ago did measure it, but those easy things don't interest me."

"Measured its height?" exclaimed Sardley.

"Height, diameter, and circumference."

Sardley smiled with easy confidence. He knew mighty little outside of his own little rut in the city, but the city man seldom appreciates his ignorance.

"How did he measure its height?" demanded Sardley.

"Just as any smart boy would," replied Dodd, with solemn innocence.

"How would any smart boy do it?" persisted Sardley. "Don't be evasive, Dodd. We've got to have this demonstrated."

"Oh, if you want to know the height of the tree," said Dodd, "why, measure it."

"How?" demanded Sardley.

"Get a long, straight stick," said Dodd.

Sardley disturbed his comfort long enough to get a stick.

"Measure the stick," said Dodd.

"And then," laughed Sardley, as he followed instructions, "I suppose you'll tell me to climb the tree and use the stick as a sort of yardstick. What is the joke, Dodd?"

"It's coming," replied Dodd. "Now, hold the stick straight up from the ground and measure its shadow."

"Done," said Sardley. "When are you coming to the incantation?"

"Measure the shadow of the tree from base to tip," instructed Dodd.

"That's a good deal of a job, Dodd," protested Sardley, for Dodd was now sitting comfortably on the edge of the porch, and Sardley was busy in the sun.

"That's what the boy said," asserted Dodd. Sardley was about to throw down the stick and measure in disgust when Dodd added: "But the boy did it, and he got the height of the tree."

Sardley looked at Dodd uncertainly.

"When he knew how much of a stick it took to cast a certain shadow at a certain time of day," Dodd went on, "he found out how much of a tree it would take to cast another certain shadow at the same time of day, — just as any smart boy would."

Leonard and the ladies laughed, and Sardley's face grew red.

"Why, of course!" exclaimed Sardley. "I knew that, but somehow I didn't happen to think of it."

"The things we know and don't think of when we ought to know them most don't count for much in this world," remarked Dodd, drily. Dodd did not like to be patronized or "guyed," and when he

detected a disposition on the part of any one to do either of these things, he usually managed to acquit himself creditably. "And, on the other hand," he added, "if we could always remember the things that we know when we ought to remember them, we'd all of us reduce our mistakes by more than half."

"The height of the tree," announced Sardley, who had been busy with pencil and paper, "is fifty-nine feet."

"The diameter of the spread of its branches," added Dodd, looking into space reflectively, "is fifty-six feet, which, as any schoolboy knows, gives a circumference of 168 feet."

"How did you come to figure that out?" asked Sardley.

"For amusement."

"Queer kind of amusement!"

"Well, perhaps, but I don't know that it's any queerer than playing cards or drinking wine, and it's a blame sight cheaper and healthier."

"Did you count the leaves — for amusement?" asked Sardley.

Dodd looked the tree over from top to bottom.

"No," he said at last, "I didn't count the leaves, but, when they're all there, you could find enough of them to cover ten acres of ground."

"Now you're joking!" exclaimed Sardley.

"I can show you," returned Dodd, slowly, "how any smart boy can do the problem."

"No, thank you!" replied Sardley, hastily. "I don't want any more smart-boy examples. But how did you do it?"

"I read up a little on maples, learned how thickly the leaves ordinarily grow, experimented a little on a small scale, verified the minor estimates, got the thing satisfactorily settled for a small tree, reduced the total leaf area to square yards, and then it was a simple matter to progress to the big tree and acres."

"Is that amusement?" asked Sardley, when he had recovered from his astonishment.

"Oh, it's every man to his taste," answered Dodd. "There are some who like to go over to Elk Rapids on circus day and come home broke and nervous, but figures suit me."

"Does that tree tell you anything else?" asked Miss Winton. "You seem to be able to get a good deal of information from it."

Dodd looked at the tree again in his deliberate way, and then turned to Miss Winton.

"The tree," he said, quizzically, "tells me something that leads me to surmise that it is not a feminine tree."

"Not a feminine tree!" they all exclaimed.

"That, you understand," Dodd explained, with a barely perceptible twinkle in his eyes, "is merely a surmise from what it tells me."

"What does it tell you?" inquired Mrs. Sardley.

"It tells me its age," replied Dodd, and now Sardley had his opportunity to laugh.

"Anything else?" asked the ladies, anxious to pass on to the next point.

"Yes," answered Dodd. "It tells me that this ground was clear before the days of the white man."

"How can it tell you that?" persisted Miss Winton.

"Because," replied Dodd, "a tree seeks the light. In a forest it shoots straight up to get to the sun, but on open ground it spreads out. This tree is two hundred years old and has a wonderful spread. It was probably one of the boundary marks of an Indian clearing."

"You must have wasted a lot of time over these things," remarked Sardley.

"Was it wasted?" asked Dodd, rising; "or was it the time previously spent in the city that was wasted?"

"We'd rather you'd answer your own question," said Mrs. Sardley. "Which was it?"

"That, madam, depends upon the point of view," replied Dodd. Then, turning to Leonard: "Want to drive over after some tools with me?"

"Glad to," answered Leonard. "Need some new tools?"

"No," returned Dodd, "I need some old ones."

"Borrowing?" laughed Mrs. Sardley. "I've heard you all borrow in the country."

"No; some of us merely loan. But the borrower in the country thinks he has done all that is necessary if he sends for the thing he wants. We didn't understand that when we first came here, and I loaned a lantern, expecting it to be returned. Having need of it a few months later, I went after it, and found there wasn't enough left to bring home. In my ignorance of local custom, I undertook to gently chide the man, and he retorted: 'Well, if you wanted it, why didn't you come for it?'"

"If that's the case, I wonder that you loan anything," exclaimed Miss Winton.

"I've often wondered that myself," returned Dodd, with the air of one who was truly puzzled. And he sometimes did wonder why he was so accommodating. "By the way," he added, as he was moving away in the direction of the barn. "I've had a letter from Miss Marsden, and she wants to

bring her sister back here for the rest of the summer. She says they must get into the country somewhere."

"I should think they would go somewhere else," said Miss Winton.

"Well," exclaimed Dodd, unconsciously apologizing for the absent ones, "it's rather difficult to find another suitable place, and make the necessary arrangements just now, under the circumstances."

"It's nothing to us," put in Mrs. Sardley, "for we're going, anyhow, but it will freshen distressing memories for others who were here when — when it happened, and people don't like distressing things on summer outings."

"No, they don't," admitted Dodd.

"They'll feel as if they ought to be walking on tiptoe and talking in whispers."

"I suppose so," said Dodd.

"And they'll leave, to get away from the feeling of depression."

"Some will," Dodd conceded.

"It's a hard proposition for you," suggested Sardley. "Have you decided what to do?"

"Yes."

"What?"

"Well," said Dodd, slowly, "it sort of seemed

to me that that little woman needs the farm more than all the rest of us put together just now."

It was said without bitterness, but it left some worldly people puzzled and thoughtful. They couldn't understand Dodd. He was "peculiar."



CHAPTER IV.

A NEW MEASURE OF VALUE

"I'M thinking of starting in to do something when I go back to the city," remarked Leonard, as he and Daniel Dodd drove along on Dodd's errand.

"Haven't you done anything yet?" asked Dodd.

"Nothing much, except live on my income."

"Like a reservation Indian," said Dodd.

There was something in Dodd's smile that soothed the sting of his occasional sarcasm. While the young man felt that it was a palpable hit, he was not disposed to resent it.

"When you've got bank stock that's paying you pretty regular dividends, you've no incentive to work," argued Leonard.

"That depends on the man," returned Dodd. "I worked the hardest when my money was in a bank."

"Where is it now?" asked Leonard.

"Still in the bank, I guess."

"And where's the bank?"

"You'll have to ask the receiver. He had it the last I knew anything about it, and it was such a good thing he didn't seem to want to let go."

"Whose bank was it?"

"Mine, partly."

"So that's where you get your penchant for figures?" suggested Leonard, at a loss for anything else to say. When a man inadvertently touches upon a failure in another man's career, he instinctively feels that he is on dangerous ground.

"Well," replied Dodd, thoughtfully, "after a good many years spent in the management of a country bank, I naturally had to look for mathematical problems of some kind. I tell you, a country bank is the place to study finance right close to the people."

"And you studied it?"

"I had to, and I think I learned it, too, — all but one thing."

"What's that?"

"Why, I neglected to draw out my investment when I drew out myself."

Leonard did not wish to seem impertinently inquisitive, but he was interested, and he finally remarked that the bank, apparently, did not fail under Dodd's management.

"No," replied Dodd, slowly. "I bought this place with an idea of an old age of ease and comfort right next to nature, and a few years later I had to take off my coat and hustle to make it pay. It's a big place, and I had great plans for it, but I no longer had the money to carry out the plans. You've got to put money into a farm in order to take it out, — especially a fruit farm. The average farmer doesn't seem to know this, but he's beginning to learn it. You've got to be generous to your farm or it won't be generous to you, and it takes money and men to be generous to a farm. Do you know who is considered the richest man in this vicinity?"

"No. Who?"

"Old Hank Dickman."

"What's he worth?"

"Five able-bodied sons."

Leonard gave Dodd a quick look, but the latter never smiled.

"That's a new way of figuring wealth," Leonard suggested at last.

"It's what counts up here," returned Dodd. "There are a thousand bushels of cherries being picked in this district to-day, and there ought to be five thousand. The difference represents waste. People are crying for work in the city, and people

are crying for men, women, or children to do the work up here. That's why fruit is often high, even when the crop is large."

"I suppose you even up on the increased price, then."

Dodd looked thoughtfully out over the country.

"The only man who has a certainty," he replied, "is the man who sells his fruit as it stands, the buyer to do the picking and packing. He gets a lump sum and takes no risk, but only the best can be sold that way. Take apples, for instance. Hank Dickman is so rich in boys that his orchards are always in the very best of condition. They are ploughed up regularly, and every possible care given to the trees, and he'll sell to a fruit-buyer from the city for \$3,000 or \$4,000 spot cash. The buyer will send his own men up here to pick, pack, and ship the apples. Dickman might make a little more by shipping himself, but he would run a risk, for a bad storm might do serious harm, and, even with his five boys, he might not be able to handle the crop. The buyer can do the work more economically and with greater certainty, for he will buy the product of many orchards. No one could afford to bring pickers and packers from the city for his own crop, even if he could get them."

"And what do the rest of you do, — those who are unable to sell on this plan?" asked Leonard.

"Oh, we do the best we can," answered Dodd. "We capture such men as happen to stray into this region; we brutally insist upon putting them to work at good wages; we pick and pack the apples, and ship them to our favourite commission men, and then, in the course of time, we learn how much we owe, because the apples have steamed or been bruised. Shipping fruit to market at your own risk is one of the most exciting forms of gambling known to mankind. But you generally lose, because the player at the other end of the line has the last say, and you can't prove he's a liar without going to the city with your shipment."

Dodd's tone and manner of whimsical resignation, as he gave this description of conditions, amused Leonard immensely, but he could see that there was a real hardship in it all. Later, when he learned more of Dodd's story, he was forced to admire the courage with which the old man faced the unexpected reverses just when he believed he had established himself comfortably for life. Having retired from active business, he had interested himself in planning to beautify and improve this fine old place, and then — he had to devote himself to the problem of making it furnish an immediate

living for himself and his wife. He could not be generous to his farm unless his farm was first generous to him. He had to take off his coat and go to work in the fields. Knowing what was necessary to make the place pay handsomely, he found himself so involved that he had to abandon all hope of ever being able to accomplish it. But Daniel Dodd was as kindly and as cheerful in adversity as he ever had been in prosperity. He might be "peculiar," but he had the wisdom of practical business experience, and his assistance and advice was cheerfully given to any of his neighbours who might seek it. There were many who came to him with their financial problems, or, indeed, problems or questions of any description.

Then, to help out, the Dodds began to take summer boarders. The buildings on their place had been put up by a man of wealth, who had planned to spend his summers there, so they were constructed on a much larger and better scale than other structures in the vicinity. All in all, it was an ideal place for a quiet summer, and became deservedly popular with the few who knew of it. But to know the place was not to know Dodd. To most of the boarders, he was a mystery. He dressed like a farmer, and he looked like one; he made no pretensions to being anything else; he seldom spoke

of his experience as a business man; but he had an extraordinary amount of information stored away in his mind, and he knew where to find almost anything desired.

"Dodd," said a boarder, on one occasion, "have they any kind of a reference library at Traverse City?"

"What do you want to find out?" asked Dodd.

"Why, we've been having a little argument about State repudiation of debts in this country, and we want to find out just what States were guilty of it."

Dodd was hoeing in the garden at the time. He dropped his hoe, and started for a little house that lay back of the main building. Presently he returned with a book.

"I could have told you most of them from memory," he said, "but it's just as well to be certain about these things. Here's the list." And he read it aloud while the other jotted down the names. "My reference library is back there," he explained. "I intended to have my office and den there, but" — with one of his whimsical smiles — "I decided later to have it out in the fields under my hat."

On another occasion a boarder, looking for something to read on a rainy day, asked Dodd if he happened to have anything a little better than the

light summer fiction with which most of the visitors were supplied.

"How would Macaulay do?" asked Dodd.

"Got something of Macaulay's?" inquired the boarder, in surprise.

"I've got his complete works," replied Dodd.

"Got it at a bargain, I suppose," laughed the boarder. "They're popularizing nearly everything now."

"Yes, it was a bargain," returned Dodd. "For a fellow situated as I have been, Macaulay at any price would be a bargain."

"Much of a library?" asked the boarder.

"No; not much of a one," replied Dodd. "Only about a thousand volumes, in one place and another, but I selected it with considerable care."

These little details, throwing a light on Dodd's character and predilections, came to the knowledge of Leonard gradually, and, at the time of their drive, the latter realized only that the former was a most interesting and entertaining man. He was thinking of the surprises that the old man constantly gave him, when Dodd suddenly checked his horses.

"Are you armed?" asked Dodd, anxiously.

"What's the matter?" inquired Leonard.

For answer, Dodd pointed to a man walking toward them.

"He doesn't look dangerous," said Leonard.

"Dangerous!" exclaimed Dodd. "Of course he isn't dangerous, and neither are we. That's the trouble. I want that man. He looks as if he could work. Well," resignedly, "if we can't kidnap him, we'll have to do the best we can in some other way."

Then he hailed the man.

"Want a lift?" he asked.

"You ain't going my way," the man replied.

"But I will be going your way when I come back," said Dodd. "And you're going my way now."

The man looked puzzled.

"I ain't much stuck on walkin' when I can ride," he admitted. "I'm goin' to Bentley's."

"Why don't you go to Dodd's?" asked the genial Daniel, with the air of a disinterested party who hated to see even a stranger make a mistake. "It's nearer, you know."

"Who's Dodd?" asked the man.

"Oh, Dodd's a queer old fellow who'll hitch up and drive ten miles any day rather than have a man who's coming to work for him get all tired out on the way. Dodd's a little peculiar, and he likes to have men reach his place good and fresh. You'll be all rested up when I drop you at Dodd's on the way back."

"How much does Dodd pay?"

"Why, he pays just a leetle bit more than Bentley does, and he keeps his good men right through the cherry season and the apple season and all the rest of it."

"Blamed if I don't think Bentley might have sent for me," said the man, undecided.

"Dodd would," asserted the crafty Daniel, solemnly, "and he'll send you back when you want to leave. Dodd's men don't have to walk."

"Does Dodd pay you for getting men for him?" asked the man, suspiciously.

"No. I do it for love of Dodd."

The man vaulted lightly over the wheel and into the back of the wagon.

"I'll take a chance with Dodd," he announced.

"All right," said Dodd, cheerfully. "I'm Dodd."

For a moment the man seemed to be in doubt. Then he laughed long and loud.

"You suit me," he said. "I ain't up here for my health, an' I'll work for Dodd."

Dodd turned and looked at him thoughtfully for a moment.

"I suppose," he said, "you wouldn't let me tie you up."

"Why should I?" demanded the man.

"Oh, I don't insist," Dodd hastened to explain.

"But I wish you'd lie down in the wagon-box where people can't see you. When I get a prize package, I don't like to have it stolen before I get home."

The man studied Dodd's face, and finally caught the fleeting smile. Thereupon he passed judgment with the words, "You're all right."

"But I'm sorry about Bentley," said Dodd; "that is, I am commercially sorry."

"What's being commercially sorry?" inquired Leonard.

"Why, when you're commercially sorry for a man, you're just sorry enough so's not to let it interfere with business. You say, 'Too bad about poor old Jones!' and then you reach out for anything he happens to have that you want, and tell your lawyer to jump in ahead of the other creditors. I'm commercially sorry for Bentley, but the last time he had the chance to be commercially sorry for me, and you bet he was! Still, I don't think I'll go past Bentley's house on the way back."

"You said it was beyond Dodd's," interrupted the man.

"That," said Dodd, "is a relic of my old literary habits. It's what we call commercial fiction."

CHAPTER V.

LEONARD AND THE BEE

THE new man was slightly below medium height and stockily built. He looked like a good, able-bodied man, and the unobserving would have given him no second thought, but Leonard had noted the lightness and ease with which he vaulted over the side of the wagon. Leonard's college life was not so far behind him that he had forgotten how to distinguish an athlete, and to him every movement of this man conveyed an impression of power. There were indications of strength, but there was also more than strength. The strong man is not necessarily active.

Dodd broke in on Leonard's meditations with a question.

"Now that I've got you," he said to the man, "I'd like to know what to call you."

"Call me 'Ben,'" was the reply.

"Ben what?"

"I don't need more'n one name."

"Like a horse," suggested Dodd, and Ben looked troubled until he caught the twinkle of an eye. "Of course," Dodd went on, "one name is enough for all ordinary affairs, but it wears out quick that way, and it gets monotonous. Now, I'm Dodd and Mr. Dodd and Daniel Dodd and Dan and Dan'l. That gives enough variety to keep me from getting sick of myself. If I was Dodd all the time, or Dan all the time, I'd feel like a fiddle with one string, and pretty soon I'd go crazy for want of something in a little different key. Besides, a fellow has got to have a last name for formal occasions. You couldn't get a marriage license for just Ben."

Ben was busy trying to fill a pipe, as the wagon jolted along, but this suggestion so startled him that he spilled his tobacco.

"I don't want a marriage license!" he exclaimed, worried.

"I presume not," said Dodd.

"I don't want a wife," persisted Ben.

"No?" returned Dodd. "Well, a man's wishes in that respect are of trifling importance if some smart woman happens to decide that he will make a good husband."

"She'd have to be pretty smart to get me," said Ben.

"Comparatively smart," said Dodd.

"What do you mean by that?" asked Leonard.

"Why, a woman is comparatively smart when she's smarter than a man, but she isn't considered real smart unless she's smarter than another woman." Then after a pause: "All women are comparatively smart."

After Ben had considered this for a few minutes and decided that it was too deep for him, he surrendered and announced that his last name was Ackerman.

"Thank you," said Dodd. "If I didn't know your full name, I couldn't put it on a check or a deed to the farm when you get ready to leave. Sometimes I think it would be easier to put it on a deed, but the help don't seem to want the bother of looking after the farm."

"You may have labour troubles of one kind," laughed Leonard, "but you escape the domestic problem of the city."

"Do we?" returned Dodd. "Well, looking at it in one way, perhaps we do. Up here we don't have any domestics. Sometimes, by using a little diplomacy, we get a girl to help us out, just as an accommodation, but she isn't a domestic; she's a friend of the family. We have to be mighty careful how we treat her. She's one of us, and she makes

us understand that she doesn't have to work, and is only doing it as a favour to us, and we're expected to be properly grateful. But I notice she takes the money just the same. Now, down in the city, you're establishing domestic science schools, but, as near as I can make out, the daughters of the wealthy are the ones who are going to them, and I've been wondering just how that's going to work out. The girls who ought to know how to cook are too proud to learn, and the girls who have money enough to employ cooks are anxious to get the instruction. It worried me a little, but I think I see a solution of the problem now."

"What is it?" asked Leonard. "If you can solve that problem your fortune is made."

"It's easy," explained Dodd. "The girls who have to earn their own living won't learn to cook, but they'd make almost any sacrifice for a chance to equip themselves for the ballroom and the parlour. Therefore, instead of arranging to give cooking diplomas, there should be a system of instruction in etiquette for the girls who seek domestic employment. Then, when Mrs. and Miss Cræsus desired to give a fine luncheon, they would go into the kitchen themselves, and send Bridget and Hannah into the parlour to entertain the guests."

Even Ben Ackerman saw the point of this, and,

by the time he was through laughing at the absurdity of the idea, Dodd had turned into a lane and stopped before a barn. Ben sprang to the ground instantly, but Dodd passed the reins to Leonard and left him on the seat of the wagon.

"If you'll excuse me a moment," said Dodd, "I'll go in and thank this fellow for the privilege of being allowed to loan him my tools and then take this long ride on a busy day to get them again."

Just at that moment a man, with his head enveloped in mosquito-netting, appeared at the door of the barn, and with him came a few aggressive bees.

"Better drive those horses along," called the man. "I'm extracting the honey, and the bees don't feel good about it."

"Drive down the road a bit," said Dodd to Leonard, but just at that moment a bee made a dart for Leonard's head, and the young man dropped the reins to wave his arms frantically.

"Don't do that!" cried Dodd.

"Keep still! keep still!" yelled the man at the barn door.

"That only excites the bee!" added Dodd.

"Well, the bee excites me!" retorted Leonard. He had his hat off now and was waving that. The bee would circle just out of reach and then dart

in suddenly, and Leonard would endeavour to hit it with his hat. Neither scored.

"I'll bet on the bee!" exclaimed Dodd.

"Look out for the horses!" cautioned the man at the barn. "That ain't the only bee on the place."

"Drive on!" cried Dodd.

"What with — my feet?" asked Leonard, still deeply absorbed in his duel with the bee.

"That fellow's going to get you, if he can," asserted the man at the barn, with the critical air of an authority who had made a careful study of the case.

"Do you think I don't know that?" retorted Leonard.

"You've got him mad!" said Dodd, in a reproachful tone.

"He's got me mad!" shouted Leonard.

Ben Ackerman had backed away at the opening of hostilities. As he afterward explained, he was no coward, but bees were not in his line, and he expected more to follow. But, however the other bees may have felt about being disturbed, this seemed to be the only one that had outlined a definite course of action. Ackerman, finding that there was to be no general engagement that would call for action on his part, thereupon surrendered to the excitement of watching this contest.

"Hit him! hit him!" he yelled, jumping up and down. "Now you've got him! Look out! he's going to land on the point of your jaw! He's behind you! Guard your left ear! You hit him! you hit him! No, you didn't! Aw, cut and run for it! He's too much of a featherweight for you!"

With one final sweep of his hat to drive the bee back, Leonard sprang from the wagon.

"Run for the house!" cried the man at the barn. "Mary, open the door!"

The shouts and cries had already brought Mary to the scene, and she hastily threw open the screen-door to the kitchen. But Leonard and the bee arrived there at the same time, and Leonard couldn't see how he was to gain anything by taking the bee into the house, so he veered suddenly and went down the lane to the main road. Ben Ackerman followed, yelling: "Hit him! hit him!" And then, gaining in aggressiveness, "Let me get a chance at him!"

"Come and get it!" cried Leonard, as, with waving hat and arms, he struck the main road and disappeared in a gully. Dodd and the man at the barn stood looking after them, as they came out of the gully and continued down the road, still followed by Ackerman.

"He's got lots of speed," remarked the man.

"So has the bee," returned Dodd.

Then they saw Leonard and Ackerman coming back at a slow walk, fanning themselves with their hats.

"If I was a betting man," said Dodd, drily, "I'd bet that they've lost the bee."

And so it proved.

"I struck some brush," explained Leonard, "and the next thing I knew the bee was gone."

"You ought to have taken to the bushes the first thing," said Dodd. "I could have told you that a bee can only follow in the open."

"Why didn't you?" demanded Leonard.

"Well," replied Dodd, "the spirit in which you took the few suggestions I made didn't encourage me to make any more. I couldn't see any indications of gratitude for my well-meant efforts."

"Wait till I get a chance to throw some pieces of advice at you," laughed Leonard.

"Even if the bee had got you," put in the man at the barn, "you would have got revenge. A bee kills itself when it stings, for the sting tears away a part of the bee itself when the barb catches. To sting you meant death to the bee."

"That's why he ran," chuckled Dodd. "He did it all for the bee. He wasn't thinking of himself, but he's so tender-hearted he couldn't bear to kill

the bee. Why, he wouldn't sleep to-night if he thought he'd killed a bee."

Leonard thought of the sting, and promptly agreed with the latter part of this statement.



CHAPTER VI.

RETURNING AND DEPARTING GUESTS

WITH the return of Jessie Marsden and her sister, Mrs. Congrove, there was an exodus of some of the other board-

ers, but Dodd was imperturbable, although it meant a great deal to him. Some had engaged accommodations for a definite period, but he let them go without a word.

"I never tried to hold any one here against his will yet," he said, "and I never shall, — that is, except Ben Ackerman, and up here we look on help in the fruit season as property rather than people. It's all right to hang on to your property."

Thus, even when things seemed to be going wrong, he was the same Daniel Dodd, with the same quaint humour. And to the people who were going he was a greater enigma than ever. A death

at the beginning of the season, they held, was enough to cast a gloom over the whole place for the whole summer, and the presence of the widow, no matter how much she secluded herself, would be a constant reminder of that which they would wish to forget. Nevertheless, while they were able to justify their course to themselves, some of them expected an objection from Dodd. But he was as cheerfully accommodating in the matter of their departure as he had been on the occasion of their arrival.

"It's costing you quite a bit," Leonard ventured to suggest.

"Yes," he replied, slowly, "but it's worth the price."

"What's worth the price?"

"This demonstration of the fact that I am running my own place in my own way," replied Dodd.

However, Jessie Marsden noted the fact that of the twelve or fourteen people who had come there for the summer, all but four or five left. Such movements are contagious. Let two or three decide to go, discussing and explaining their reasons on every possible occasion, and presently others will become restless. In this case, if Dodd could have got the first three out of the house in the night, the moment their decision was made, he might easily

have kept the others, but this, of course, was impossible. And Jessie Marsden was quick to understand the cause of the exodus.

It had not occurred to her that it would make the slightest difference to the other guests whether she and her sister were there or not. Mrs. Congrove needed quiet and rest, and the money immediately available was very little. There might be more later or there might not, according to the lawyer who was trying to straighten out a serious tangle in her late husband's affairs. Miss Marsden had only a trifling personal income, and consequently was not able to do much for her sister's financial relief, and she knew of but one place that was suited to their needs and their resources. Unquestionably, there were others, but of this one only was she sure. In fact, the situation was precisely as Dodd had surmised when they sent word that they wished to come back. And Miss Marsden could see no reason why their presence should trouble or annoy any one else. They had no wish to be a check on the other boarders; they spent as much time in the open air as Mrs. Congrove's strength would permit; they kept to their own room in the evenings, and they met the others, as a general thing, only in the dining-room. Yet Miss Marsden soon realized that their return had done

a real injury to Daniel Dodd, and she was correspondingly unhappy about it.

"Mr. Dodd," she said to him frankly one day, "I fear we have inadvertently done you a great deal of harm by returning."

"Entirely wrong," replied Dodd, unhesitatingly. "I was worrying a little about Mrs. Dodd, and I'm glad to have her relieved of some of the work. We expected to have more help when we made our plans for the summer."

Jessie Marsden knew that Daniel Dodd lied deliberately, but she also knew that she could do nothing more unkind than to let him know that she saw through his little fiction.

"For myself," added Dodd, "I always feel better satisfied when a party gets down to the few that we really like."

Miss Marsden, knowing nothing of Dodd, was bewildered. She had not expected to find a courtier in this old man, who dressed and looked much like any other farm-hand. He seemed suddenly to grow and change; she looked through the farmer and saw the man, with his quiet, unassuming consideration for herself and her sister, and his generous way of stating the case. But that only made it seem the more imperative that they should relieve him of any embarrassment.

"My sister and I," she said, with the same cheerfulness that he had lied to her a moment before, "have been thinking of leaving. She — she is not going to be happy here."

"Would she be happy anywhere just now?" asked Dodd, quietly.

"No, no, of course not," Miss Marsden answered, disconcerted. "I didn't mean that, but —"

The resourceful young woman, upon whom others always had relied, was plainly perturbed by the earnest look of those kindly eyes. Wishing only to be as considerate of him as he had been of them, she felt as if she had been caught in some discreditable trick, and she blushed. She knew that she, always so ready, had bungled this time.

"Mrs. Dodd and I," said Dodd, removing his hat and bowing gravely, — an action that savoured of old-time courtesy, — "will be much hurt if you leave us. We shall feel that we have failed somehow in our duty as hosts." Then he added, incidentally: "No one is coming back, anyway."

That was the deciding argument. Even if they could leave in the face of his expressed wish that they remain, their departure now would help matters in no way, for the harm had been done.

Miss Marsden went back to her sister, feeling that she had unexpectedly discovered a splendid

specimen of the true gentleman. She said nothing of her conversation, for she had acted on her own responsibility and did not wish to worry Mrs. Congrove. The latter was weak, listless, and depressed. She was lying in a hammock, where she spent most of her time when not in her room, but the course she had followed did not suit the energetic Jessie.

"The way to gain strength is to do something," the latter held. "The way to gain happiness is to do something. Idleness never yet drove grief or sorrow from any heart."

So Jessie, acting on this idea without putting it into spoken words, gently insisted upon occasional short strolls that would not overtax her sister's strength. She insisted upon one now, and presently they found themselves in front of a small building where cherries were being sorted and packed.

"I should think that would be fun!" exclaimed Jessie.

"Let's rest here a moment, anyway," said Mrs. Congrove, seating herself on a box by the door. "I like to watch them."

Jessie stood beside her and watched, also, and a short distance back of her, unobserved, stood Leonard. But Leonard was watching the young woman and not the workers. He noted the restless movement of her fingers and the deep interest she took

in all that was going on. He saw her look at Mrs. Dodd, who was superintending operations, with an appeal in her bright eyes.

"By thunder!" he ejaculated to himself. "She wants to go to work."

Leonard, idly smoking, could not understand any one wishing to work for the mere sake of working. He would work to gain some desired end, but leisure was much more in his line. He was not afraid of work, but he saw no pleasure in it, and it never had been necessary. Consequently, he merely had a profession to which he gave no attention and from which he derived no income. He did not even have to worry over investments, for all he had was in the stock of a single concern with which his father had been connected previous to his death, and the dividends were regular and reasonably good. Yet, unable to understand, Leonard nevertheless had judged Jessie Marsden rightly: she wanted to be one of the workers, and, even as he watched, she spoke to Mrs. Dodd, and the latter laughed and procured a big apron. A moment later the young woman was as busy as the rest.

"Now what do you think of that!" Leonard remarked to himself.

Then he noted that Mrs. Congrove was betraying more than customary interest in the proceedings.

She was absorbed in the progress her sister was making, compared with the experts. Her eyes brightened a little and she looked at her own hands speculatively.

"Mrs. Dodd," she called at last, "do you think I could do a little — just a little?"

Jessie smiled happily at this evidence of awakened interest, trifling as it was, and Mrs. Dodd hastened to arrange matters for the new worker. Jessie felt that real progress had been made; she did not believe in brooding.

Then a strange thing happened. Leonard, the idler, suddenly discovered that he wanted to help. He could not understand it, but he certainly wanted a place with the others, and it would be especially pleasing if that place happened to be next to Jessie Marsden. He battled with this extraordinary impulse for a few moments; he tried to convince himself that he was mistaken as to his inclination and would get himself into an unpleasant predicament. It was of no use. He watched the quick Jessie and her slower sister; he heard them laugh over their blunders and awkwardness while accustoming themselves to the work; he could see that they found real pleasure in this very commonplace occupation, and he was irresistibly impelled to try it himself.

"Don't you think I could be of some use?" he

asked, throwing away his cigar and advancing to the shed.

"Oh, you don't want to bother with this sort of thing," returned Mrs. Dodd.

"But I do," he insisted. "Can't I help you, Miss Marsden?"

"Oh, I'm strong enough to handle cherries alone," she answered, provokingly.

"This isn't the kind of work to interest a man," added Mrs. Dodd. "You'd get tired of it very soon."

"And want to smoke," suggested Miss Marsden, maliciously. "Now, if you could sort cherries in a hammock or a reclining-chair without letting it interfere with the enjoyment of your cigar —"

They all laughed, for Leonard's laziness had become a sort of standing joke. Leonard laughed, too, but he did not press the point, and presently strolled away.

"That's what reputation does for a fellow," he mused. "When I want to do something, I can't, because I never have done anything. But think of wanting to sort cherries for fun and being disappointed because I can't. There must be something wrong with me. Perhaps industry is contagious!"

CHAPTER VII.

AT TERRACE COTTAGE

"HAVE you been down to Terrace Cottage?" asked Leonard, when he found Miss Marsden and her sister under the big maple later in the day.

"We haven't tried to go anywhere yet," replied Miss Marsden, busy, as always, with some fancy work.

"But you must see Terrace Cottage," urged Leonard. "It's one of the features of the place."

"Is it so wonderful?" inquired Mrs. Congrove.

"The cottage itself is not so wonderful," replied Leonard, "but it's the only existing feature of Dodd's most wonderful summer-resort plans. You must get him to tell you about those plans some day."

"Why doesn't he carry them out?" asked Miss Marsden.

"Why don't I go to Europe on my steam-yacht?" retorted Leonard, laughing.

"Well, why don't you?"

"Because I can't pay for the yacht." Then he added: "Dodd certainly has original ideas and wonderful plans. If he had a few hundreds of thousands of dollars, I can see only one reason why he could not make this a famous resort."

"What's the one reason?" asked Mrs. Congrove.

"He has so many and such elaborate plans that he wouldn't know where to begin. Terrace Cottage is a mere incident in them."

"I'm becoming interested," said Mrs. Congrove. "Do you suppose it would tire me too much to walk to this cottage?"

"I shall be glad to assist you," said Leonard.

"We can stop for a rest if you get tired," suggested Miss Marsden.

"I'll try it," Mrs. Congrove decided.

The peninsula that runs out into Grand Traverse Bay rises in great terraces from the water, and these terraces continue below the surface of the water. In some places there is a sheer drop only a few feet from the shore, and in others one may wade a considerable distance out before reaching the edge of the submerged terrace. But it is there, and presumably there are others beyond. In brief, the peninsula is a huge flight of steps rising out of Grand Traverse Bay, — a sort of elongated pyramid with a very uneven top, — and where the Dodd

farm stood there were three terraces, designated upper, middle, and lower, before the bay was reached. A steep and tortuous road led down to the water, with roads branching out at right angles on each terrace.

Reaching the middle terrace in leisurely fashion, the three rested a few minutes, and then sauntered northward along the winding road on this terrace. The big, straight trees came right to the edge of the road, the tortuous nature of which made it impossible to see more than a few feet ahead. Thus they came upon the cottage suddenly, so deeply hidden was it. Yet, when they reached it, it seemed extraordinary that it could be so concealed. It was not a small cottage, by any means, having two stories and an attic and a total of nine rooms, while behind it stood a barn and wagon-shed. Nevertheless, these buildings were so placed that there was no hint of their presence until one was almost upon them, although, being on the edge of the middle terrace, there was a good water view over the tops of the trees on the terrace below.

Miss Marsden and Mrs. Congrove gave exclamations of astonishment when the cottage dawned on their view.

"I thought we were still in the deep woods!" cried Miss Marsden.

"You are," replied Leonard. "There is nothing for more than a mile ahead, and nothing nearer than the Dodd farmhouse behind. If you want solitude within reach of the comforts of civilization, here is the place to get it. If I can get a congenial party to come with me, which I can't, I'll take this house next year."

"Why can't you?" asked Miss Marsden, as she and her sister sat down on the steps to rest.

"Oh, my friends are the friends of the city," replied Leonard, regretfully. "They want excitement and lively times. Saratoga is the place for them."

"Or Newport?" suggested Mrs. Congrove.

"Oh, no. Newport is too exclusive. You have to have your own cottage there, or else derive some satisfaction from merely being where society is. We're not tuft-hunters; we don't care any more for the Vanderbilts and the Goelets and the Bradley-Martins than they do for us; but we are as weak as they in being insufficient for ourselves. We must pay others for our entertainment; we're poor in resources; we have not learned the joys of quiet and solitude; so, if we are not rich enough to bring excitement to us, we must go where excitement is."

"I fear you malign yourself unjustifiably," said

Miss Marsden, "for you have come here where there is nothing going on."

"Because I'm venturesome," explained Leonard. "I'm trying to break the ennui of excitement. The others feel it, but they seek to break it by trying some other kind of excitement, while my spirit of investigation has led me to try the other extreme. Besides, I have about made up my mind to do something, and this turning from the old ways is a sort of preliminary."

"What are you going to do?" asked Miss Marsden.

"Oh, I don't know," replied Leonard, languidly. "I'm taking the summer to think it over. Can't you suggest something?"

"If Jessie can't, no one can," put in Mrs. Congrove. "Jessie has been doing things all her life."

"There's so much to do," said Miss Marsden, "that I don't see how any one can be without occupation."

"But you're so darned energetic," argued Leonard, plaintively, "that people just naturally give you something to do. Why, you brought your fancy work down here with you."

"And you're so darned lazy," retorted Miss Marsden, quickly, "that people who want things done just naturally go to some one else."

While this was said in a spirit of raillery, it was so true a hit that it jarred Leonard.

"Well, you see, I never have had to do anything," he explained. "While I'm not rich, I've always had all the money I needed, and there isn't even an estate to look after, for it's all in the stock of one concern that pays regular dividends. I got in with a crowd that had no more to do than I, and I've just drifted along ever since. But I'm going to get into some business when I go back to the city, if only for the novelty of it."

Miss Marsden looked at him curiously, as if he were some strange animal.

"I can't comprehend it," she said. "I would like to have money and the leisure to use it as seemed to me best; I appreciate the pleasures of life as much as any one; but to have no useful occupation would drive me to distraction. I don't see how any one can be happy without any real interest in life."

"Perhaps no one is," returned Leonard, thoughtfully. "Perhaps the people whose frivolities we criticize are merely striving to be happy—and failing. And perhaps they are failing because they don't strive the right way. Anyhow, I'm going to do something."

"When?"

"Oh, after a little."

"You don't know when or what?"

"No. I'm thinking it over. You see, I've never had to do anything."

Before Miss Marsden could reply, there was a sound of wheels, and Daniel Dodd drove up to the house.

"Oh, Mr. Dodd," called Miss Marsden, with a malicious glance at Leonard, "Mr. Leonard says he's never done anything because he never had to do anything. What do you think of that?"

Miss Marsden was reasonably sure that any such statement would bring an interesting reply from Dodd, and Leonard was sharp enough to see that she was deliberately putting him up as a target.

"On the farm," said Dodd, in his deliberate way, "the animal that doesn't have to do anything is the one that is being fattened for slaughter, and the only way it can escape its fate is to become active on its own account. Sometimes, when I read about the way inherited fortunes disappear, it seems as if that was the way the thing worked on the human farm, too."

"I presume that means that I'm being fattened financially for the benefit of some city sharper," laughed Leonard, although two such hits in quick

succession were annoying. "I'll have to go to work at once."

"At sorting cherries?" asked Miss Marsden, whereupon Leonard gave her a reproachful look. But he saw the point: something more strenuous was expected of an earnest man. His one ambition in the line of work had been a mere trifling whim.

"Would you like to see the inside of the cottage?" asked Dodd.

"Oh, you brought the keys with you!" exclaimed Miss Marsden. "We forgot to ask for them."

"I never lock it," said Dodd. "There's no use giving the man who wants to get in any excuse for damaging the property, and we have no tramps up here. It serves only as a refuge in case of sudden storm. Come in."

Dodd pushed open the door, and the others followed him in. Mrs. Congrove did not go above the first floor, but the others explored every corner of it — for which Miss Marsden later had reason to be most thankful.

"I should think it would be a delightful place for the summer!" she commented, when they had returned to the little front porch.

"That is the universal opinion of all but the right people," returned Dodd.

"What do you mean by the right people?" asked Leonard.

"The people who are financially able to make the right use of it," replied Dodd. Then, looking dreamily out over the waters of the bay, he went on: "With horses and a steam-launch, this would seem to me to be an ideal spot. It is on no public road, this wood road being my own; it is quiet and secluded, and yet only a quarter of a mile from the farm buildings, where we aim to keep pretty well stocked up with everything that is to be had in this locality. There would be fresh milk and cream and eggs and butter and fruit and vegetables and everything else in that line, and yet a party living here might well imagine itself in the wilderness. It would be a rest cure within easy reach of all reasonable comforts and pleasures. Old Mission is only a few miles away by road, and not many miles by water. Traverse City is not out of reach with a steam-launch, and Neahtawanta and Elk Rapids are much nearer. There are points of interest — of historical interest — all about here. Any one at all familiar with the early history of this region could easily become absorbed in pleasurable explorations and investigations, which horses and a steam-launch would make almost limitless. Of course, the ignorant and unobserving would find it dull, except

as they were able to touch at some of the livelier resorts: they wouldn't see anything interesting in the shortened rifle-barrel that I found on my farm."

"Did *you*?" asked Leonard.

"Would *you*?" retorted Dodd, with a quizzical smile.

"No; I confess a shortened rifle-barrel would mean nothing to me."

"Did you ever hear of the conspiracy of Pontiac?" asked Dodd.

"It has a sort of familiar sound," replied Leonard.

"I don't remember the details," admitted Miss Marsden, "and I'm sure a shortened rifle-barrel would not recall them to me."

"But you would if you trained yourself to see what lies behind the apparent trifles of this life," said Dodd, "and you'd find you had been missing a lot of pleasure by your failure to trace the connection between one thing and another. When I found that shortened rifle-barrel, I saw, in imagination, the Indians gathering outside the fort at Mackinaw for some games; I saw them begin their games with great zest; I saw the men lured from the fort to watch the contests; I saw the Indians gradually working nearer and nearer to the fort; I saw them finally, at a given signal, draw

the shortened guns from beneath their blankets, give their war-whoop, and fall upon the fort and its defenders. That's the story the shortened rifle-barrel told me; in spirit I was back with the men at Mackinaw and saw what happened. The Indians had to shorten their guns to conceal them under their blankets."

There was a moment of thoughtful silence. Then Miss Marsden said, with frank admiration: "Everything here seems to have a story for you, Mr. Dodd."

"Everything everywhere has a story for the man who has learned to read it," replied Dodd.

"If all could find stories as easily, there'd be little for the writers to do," suggested Leonard.

"The writer that you like best," returned Dodd, "tells you a story that you already knew, but never had put into words. When you recognize his characters or his incidents, he has made a hit."

"That's so," asserted Leonard, after a moment of reflection.

"And yet," continued Dodd, "we fail to give even our favourite writers the full reward and credit that is due them."

"Some stand pretty high on the roll of fame, and, in these days, some gain a pretty good store of wealth," said Leonard.

"But we overlook their commercial value," returned Dodd. "Now, I suppose you never thought of Walter Scott as a wonderful commercial success. You give him all due literary credit, but you can't see that he did more for Scotland commercially than any other one man in the history of that country."

"I confess I can't," admitted Leonard.

"Yet many people go to Scotland solely for the purpose of visiting scenes that Scott made famous in his novels," said Dodd, "and others, being in Scotland for other purposes, feel that they have wasted their opportunities if they do not visit one or more of these scenes. Scott, dead, is drawing more money into Scotland than any dozen living men — unless," he added, after a pause, "Carnegie carried his fortune in his grip when he went to Skibo Castle."

They had to laugh at this quaint conception of Carnegie's migration, but twinkling eyes gave the only indication that Dodd saw the humour of the picture.

"Scott did for Scotland what Washington Irving did for the Hudson," he added. "Both added greatly to the prosperity and development of the localities in which their fictional characters moved. Scott unwittingly bequeathed a handsome living to

many Scots and wealth to some, while Irving is even now putting dividends into the pockets of the owners of Hudson River steamboat lines, hotels, stage lines, and railroads. The commercial importance of such a writer is greater than that of any captain of industry that ever lived and bowed to his own greatness — only to be forgotten a few years later.”

Miss Marsden looked at him wonderingly.

“You are always giving us surprises, Mr. Dodd,” she said. “We never know what is coming next.”

“Thank you,” said Dodd, bowing gravely.

“You consider that a compliment?” she queried.

“It is the automaton that does the same thing always in the same way,” he answered; “it is the phonograph that says the same thing always in the same way. Neither is capable of thought, and it is thought that gives to us our surprises. I should not like to believe myself an automaton or a phonograph.”

CHAPTER VIII.

"DODD'S GERMANIA"

"Did you drive down here to entertain us, Mr. Dodd?" asked Miss Marsden. "If so, it was very good of you."

"But I didn't," replied Dodd. "I drove down here to drive back. I had just returned from Old Mission when they told me that you had started off in the direction of the cottage, and I thought Mrs. Congrove might like to ride back."

"Mr. Leonard assured me that it was a short and easy walk to the cottage," explained Mrs. Congrove.

"He might have put it even stronger," said Dodd. "It's no more than a short and easy roll to the cottage. You can start at the house and roll down, but you can't roll back."

"I don't care to roll either way, thank you," laughed Mrs. Congrove.

"Anyhow," asserted Dodd, "you'll find it easier going up in my one-horse elevator."

"Then we'd better be going," said Miss Marsden. "We don't want to keep you from your work."

"If you consulted my inclinations," returned Dodd, "you wouldn't be in such a hurry to get me back to it."

"I thought you believed in work."

"I do, but a man may believe in a thing without wanting a monopoly of it. I never was a monopolist, although I succeeded in getting a corner on a pretty fair supply of work by beginning at five o'clock this morning. However, I suppose we might as well be starting, for it takes the old horse some time to begin to get ready to go." He led the horse up to the steps, and Leonard helped Mrs. Congrove into the buggy. "Now, Miss Marsden," Dodd went on, "I'm going to entrust the management of this fiery steed to you, but I must caution you to be very careful. Don't use the whip on him, because you're not strong enough to make any impression. Mr. Leonard and I will walk back."

"But I want to walk myself," protested Miss Marsden. "You don't mind, do you, Gracie?"

"By all means, walk and enjoy the woods," urged Mrs. Congrove.

"It's all so beautiful and refreshing," said Miss Marsden, apologetically.

“I can take you back by the prettiest woodland path you ever saw,” Leonard hastened to say.

Leonard’s sudden and deep interest in the combination of Miss Marsden and that path was not lost on Dodd. He looked from one to the other, and seemed to be inwardly chuckling over some huge joke.

“All right,” he said, cheerfully. “You jump in, Leonard, and I’ll take Miss Marsden back through the woodland path. You might get lost.”

“So much the better!” exclaimed Leonard, thoughtlessly.

“To get lost!” cried Miss Marsden. “No, indeed.”

“I’d be delighted to drive back with Mrs. Congrove,” said Leonard, “but — but I’m sure she’d feel safer with you, for you know the horse.”

Then a strange thing happened. Dodd deliberately winked at Mrs. Congrove, and she, grasping the meaning of that wink, had to smile. Dodd was enjoying himself at the expense of Leonard.

“It’s very good of you to be so considerate of an old man,” said Dodd, “but I’m just a little sensitive as to my infirmities, and it is a matter of pride with me now to show you that I can walk back without unusual fatigue.”

This would have been delicious to any one know-

ing Dodd, for, although well along in years, and in no sense a strong man, he had no infirmities. He listened gravely while Leonard protested that he had intended to intimate nothing of that sort, and had not even thought of such a thing.

"Oh, very well," said Dodd, in reply to this. "Suppose we let Miss Marsden settle it by choosing her escort."

"Oh, I'm entirely impartial," Miss Marsden hastened to say, nevertheless showing her discomfiture by a blush. "I shall be glad to have either of you."

"Then let Mrs. Congrove decide," said Dodd, and Mrs. Congrove was sure that she caught another wink. But it may be that Mrs. Congrove also caught the quick glance that her sister gave her. At any rate, after a moment of hesitation, she announced that she would feel a little bit safer with Mr. Dodd.

"I am flattered," said Dodd, taking his place beside Mrs. Congrove. Then he leaned over to say: "Don't stop too long at the green arbour, or linger at the red bench."

"Where is the green arbour?" asked Leonard.

"And the red bench?" added Miss Marsden.

"In the prospectus of my great summer resort," replied Dodd.

“And the prospectus?” queried Leonard.

“In my mind.” Dodd picked up the reins, but did not start the horse. “That’s going to be a great summer resort, Miss Marsden,” he explained, and there was something of regret in his tone — the regret of a man with a dream unfulfilled. “We have a big place here, with paths and roads everywhere. I would have benches and little arbours at convenient points, and, for the purpose of identification, each would be painted a different colour. Think how it would simplify matters to be able to say, ‘I’ll meet you at the white arbour,’ instead of trying to describe it as the third arbour on the second path leading from the lower terrace road. Oh, mine would be an ideal place for lovers.”

He looked at Leonard and Miss Marsden reflectively, and both became uncomfortable. Dodd’s sense of humour was too strongly developed, they decided. But the humour was kindly, as a general thing; he would not really distress another for the world.

“There would be fruit everywhere at my resort,” he went on. “When people go into the fruit country, they want fruit when they want it; it is not enough to serve it at table. There would always be fruit in the house and at the most frequented places on the grounds, so that a guest might help

himself when and how he pleased. Don't you think that would be a good idea?"

"Splendid," replied Miss Marsden. "Have you any other plans?"

"Well, yes," replied Dodd, thoughtfully. "It seems to me there ought to be a lot of money in a German resort."

"For Germans exclusively?"

"Not at all. Rather for people going to Germany. People get rich suddenly these days, and they want to equip themselves for a foreign tour. As a preliminary, they could come to my resort, where nothing but German would be spoken. All the employees would be German; the language of the place would be German, and there would be German tutors to help along the beginners. It would be like stepping into Germany to get used to it. I'm sure there are lots of wealthy people who would appreciate a place like that. It might even become a fad."

"But why German?" asked Leonard. "Why not French as well? Or Italian? Germany is not the only foreign country that has attractions for travelling Americans."

"No," replied Dodd. "But it is the only language, besides English, that one really needs to know, and the far-seeing man will not forget that

there are many prosperous Germans in this country. They would like to have their children spend an occasional summer at such a place as I describe. In fact, I would rely largely on the children for success. Even Americans who did not care to take up German themselves would be disposed to send their children here for a summer, to give them the practical knowledge of the language that is not to be gained from books. They’d come with their governesses or their tutors, if not with their parents. Why, in imagination I can hear them saying: ‘We’re going to Dodd’s Germania this summer and abroad next summer,’ or, ‘The children are at Dodd’s Germania putting the finishing touches on their German.’ And they’d be having a bully good time while they were doing it!” Dodd added, with an enthusiasm that subsided almost as soon as it appeared.

“Would you combine all these plans, or have two separate resorts?” asked Miss Marsden, with gentle raillery.

“Oh, while I’m about it,” said Dodd, picking up his whip, “I might as well have three or four resorts. All they cost is a strain on the imagination. The man who isn’t rich enough to buy a few at that price is poor indeed, no matter how much

money he may have. I wouldn't trade my imagination for his wealth."

"Wait a minute!" Leonard called, as Dodd was about to drive away. "I've been thinking about that shortened rifle-barrel, and it occurs to me that it told you a fairy-tale. This farm is quite a distance from Mackinaw."

Dodd looked at the young man pityingly.

"Was it your idea," he asked, "that the Indians left their guns at the fort for souvenirs? They lived in this region."

Leonard subsided, and Dodd touched the horse with the whip.

"Don't linger too long at the gray bench!" he called back, "and you'd better not stop at the brown harbour or you may be late for supper. My summer resort is devised to make young people forget there is such a thing as time."

A moment later he turned to Mrs. Congrove and said, solemnly:

"There's lots of fun in this world if a fellow only knows how to find it."

"You know how," she laughed, as she caught the twinkle of his eyes, and pictured to herself the discomfiture of her sister and Leonard. "I never knew a man who could provide so much harmless entertainment for himself in such original ways."

“The independent man,” returned Dodd, “is the man who can, when necessary, live within himself. I would rather be independent than rich.”

Leonard and Miss Marsden, however, did not think so highly of Dodd’s humour just at this moment. Leonard especially said (to himself) harsh things about it. If he had known Miss Marsden better, or had admired her less, the situation would have been less awkward. As it was, the reference to “an ideal place for lovers” made him self-conscious and uncomfortable, and Miss Marsden herself talked in rather a constrained way about pretty nearly everything that was of no interest. She seemed to be afraid, Leonard thought, that he might endeavour to take advantage of the situation thus created, which he deemed no compliment to him. All in all, the walk through the woods was most unsatisfactory, and left him feeling rebellious.

“I think I shall go back to the city,” he said, as they came in sight of the house.

“When?” she asked, so suddenly that it caught him unprepared and he made the foolish answer that his indolence too often dictated.

“Oh, I don’t know,” he said, meaning that he had made no definite plan.

“That’s when you’re going to do about everything, isn’t it?” she inquired.

He resented the sally, although it was quite in line with others that had been made that afternoon.

"I shall go to-morrow," he announced.

"Do you think it quite fair to Mr. Dodd?" she inquired. "He has lost a good many boarders upon whom he felt that he had a right to count."

"I shall pay him for the entire season," said Leonard, irritably.

"Do you think he's the kind of a man who would accept money offered in that way?"

"Then I must stay," he remarked.

"My impression of Mr. Dodd," she said, "is that he wouldn't have a dissatisfied boarder at any price."

"You seem to find objections to either course."

"Yes," she returned. "As an abstract problem, it interests me. The situation is peculiar."

"Only as an abstract problem?"

He said this without thought. Most of the girls he had known in his somewhat frivolous career had rather expected a mild form of flirtation.

"What possible interest could it have for me otherwise?" she asked, with disconcerting straightforwardness.

He did not answer, but he was more dissatisfied than ever. It seemed to him that to either go or stay after this would make him look foolish. He

had most absurdly and unnecessarily tangled himself up in a problem that had no satisfactory solution, and he had gained nothing. In fact, he had a feeling that she regarded him with a certain measure of contempt, as an irrational and useless weakling in a world of endeavour.

“The day-labourer must be her ideal of a man,” he told himself, and a man does not tell himself things unless he cares about them. Her opinion was of importance.

CHAPTER IX.

THE UNLICENSED BARBER

JESSIE MARSDEN regarded Ralph Leonard as something of a curiosity. She could not understand how any one could be content to lead such an aimless life. He was gentlemanly, entertaining, but, from her point of view, of no practical worth except as a problem. As such, he interested her; she liked to study him, but she gave him only such thought as she would give any interesting problem. He was generous, but his generosity cost him no personal sacrifice. How would it be in other circumstances?

Ralph Leonard regarded Jessie Marsden as something more than a puzzle. He admired her, while admitting that her aggressive industry irritated him: he wished that she would overlook a chance to do something just once. It annoyed him to find that this spirit of industry influenced even him, as in the case of the cherries, and yet, rebelling, he found himself attracted to the very cause of

his irritation. Her courage, her devotion to her sister, all appealed to him strongly, but why do work that was wholly unnecessary? The joy of labour well done never yet had come to Leonard, as was quite natural. He might work for friendship or for fame or for a passing whim or from necessity, but there must be some reason or reward to spur him on; in the work itself he saw nothing.

Just now Leonard was confronted by a very disagreeable problem, — he did not know whether to go or to stay, — and his customary indolence led him to adopt the easiest course: he let things drift. He was there; he would stay, at least temporarily. This was not a decision so much as it was a lack of decision; he merely put the whole problem aside and went on to the next question, which was the important one of shaving.

“I suppose,” he mused, “that every fellow shaves himself in this benighted country, but I would not care to try it so far away from a surgeon. Neither do I want to walk to Neahtawanta, and apparently I am not going to be as fortunate as I have been before in finding some one who is going to drive down. I’ll have to submit the problem to Dodd.”

Being comfortably settled in a reclining-chair on the front porch, and feeling that there was no great hurry about the matter, anyhow, Leonard

waited for Dodd to pass that way. Experience had taught him that Dodd might come around the corner of the house at any moment, and that, in any event, he would appear within a few hours, for Dodd gave his personal attention to the garden and adjacent orchards, letting his men go to the more distant fields. And what are a few hours to an indolent man on a vacation?

Dodd presently came along, going from the garden to the barn, and Leonard promptly hailed him.

"What do you do for a shave, Dodd?" he asked.

"Generally," replied Dodd, "I do without."

"Then you're not your own barber?"

"No," said Dodd. "I've got to have confidence in my barber."

"Then I suppose there is one in the vicinity," suggested Leonard.

"At times, during the summer," answered Dodd, "when we have helpless men from the city on the peninsula. There is one comes over to Old Mission from Elk Rapids twice a week, but he's so busy that I guess you have to make appointments ahead with him, like you do with a dentist. Then there's one at the hotel at Neahtawanta during most of the resort season."

"Yes; I tried him two or three times," said Leonard.

"You were lucky to get him," remarked Dodd. "He's only there when he happens to be there, and that's when there is nothing interesting going on elsewhere. Getting a shave up here is a good deal like a lottery."

"But what do you do?" asked Leonard.

Dodd sat down on the edge of the porch and seemed to be wrestling with this question.

"There are several things that I do," he said at last. "In the first place, I wear a beard, which simplifies matters considerably. In the second place, I have it raked with considerable regularity, which enables me to keep it untangled longer than would be possible otherwise. In the third place, I have a wife who is always glad of an opportunity to add to the material for the hair mattress she is making. Only when it's absolutely unavoidable do I go to Mrs. Dodd now, however, for she became so avaricious that she cut my whiskers to a really immodest shortness, and it made me blush to have people see me."

"Then what do you do now?"

"Why," said Dodd, confidentially, "I don't do any more than I have to, but when my whiskers get so long that they begin to tangle in the underbrush, I take a day off and go to Traverse City for a barber."

"Oh, I don't want to go so far," protested Leonard. "That's a good deal worse than Neahtawanta."

"It is in some respects, but not in others," returned Dodd. "It's a good deal longer trip, but you must remember that Traverse City is a place, and Neahtawanta is only a lonesome spot, unless you bring friends along with you. But perhaps we can fix you up without trying either place. I'll hitch up after supper, and we'll see what we can do at Old Mission."

After supper Dodd appeared with a horse and buggy, and he and Leonard set out for Old Mission.

"I hope," said Dodd, solicitously, "that you have no conscientious scruples against breaking the law."

"Breaking the law!" exclaimed Leonard. "What's the law got to do with getting a shave?"

"The law has a good deal to do with everything," replied Dodd, "and it's getting worse. There's so much law that you trip over it before you know it. Then you get up and find that you've kicked a corner off a law that you didn't know existed, and somehow you don't think you're any nearer hell than you were before. After you've broken two or three fool laws, you sort of get the law-breaking habit, and pretty soon it doesn't worry you to break any law that happens to be inconvenient.

We're getting to be a lawbreaking people — not because we're naturally lawless, but because we're tying ourselves up with laws so that we can't move without hearing something bust. Everybody wants his own little law on the statute books these days, and he gets it there, too. It's a fool law; you break it, and after that all law looks pretty cheap to you."

"But what has that to do with shaving?" asked the bewildered Leonard.

"Just as much as it has to do with shoeing horses," answered Dodd. "Now, I've got a man on my farm who can shoe a horse, but he can't."

"Please say that over again," said Leonard, plaintively.

"Perhaps it would be better to say that he can shoe a horse, but he may not," explained Dodd. "In its infinite wisdom, the legislature of this great State of Michigan has decreed that a horse may be shod only by a licensed blacksmith. No license, no shoeing. You can't shoe your own horse in an emergency without being subject to a fine."

"What in the world is the reason of that?" demanded the astonished Leonard.

"The union labour vote," replied Dodd. "If you're not a union man, you'll find it mighty hard to get a license."

"Well, that's the most absurd thing I ever heard of!" exclaimed Leonard.

"Oh, I don't know," returned Dodd. "I understand the Chicago public school-teachers have joined the Federation of Labour. How long do you think it will be before you have to have a union card to get your children into the public schools? Anyhow, if the non-unionist is not to be allowed to make a living, what's the use of educating him at all?"

"But the shaving?" urged Leonard.

Dodd assumed a whimsical, puzzled expression.

"I confess I don't quite understand that," he said. "The generosity of the great men who rule us is almost incomprehensible, for they have not made it a penal offence for a man to shave himself, merely providing a fine for the man who shaves another without first taking out a license. Even then, they've overlooked something."

"What?"

"Why, there are barber-shops on some of the limited trains that run through the State. Why don't our brilliant officials hold them up and clap fines on the alien barbers, to the everlasting glory and pecuniary profit of the sovereign State of Michigan? And I'll bet unlicensed barbers on the lake steamers occasionally work in Michigan ports.

That's the trouble with the great minds of this labour-union age; they seem to weary of a reform before they've made it really thorough."

"Do I get a licensed barber?" asked Leonard, anxiously.

"Possibly, possibly," replied Dodd. "It's Saturday night, and we may catch one at Old Mission. If not, you'll have to break the law, or go to church to-morrow as the hairy man."

"The lesser crime of the two," asserted Leonard, with conviction, "will be the breaking of the law."

"Thus," moralized Dodd, with mock solemnity, "does the law itself lure us to lawlessness. In time, we may have to submit our every proposed trifling act to a legal expert, just to keep out of jail."

At Old Mission Dodd left Leonard in the buggy, while he went to make inquiries at the office of the long, low-frame hotel that seems to have attractions for many summer visitors, principally women and children. Presently he emerged and came down the walk to the buggy with a most ludicrous imitation of a stage conspirator's walk.

"Hist!" he cautioned, in a hoarse whisper, as he came stealthily through the gate. "We are driven to crime. The licensed barber came over from Elk Rapids this morning and went back this afternoon. We must risk the horrors of an unli-

censed shave. Hist! See that we are not watched!"

Cautiously he climbed into the buggy.

"Do you see any one who looks like a detective?" he asked.

"No one," replied Leonard, laughing.

"Then we must make a break for it," said Dodd, and he whipped up the horse.

Down the road they went, faster than Leonard had ever seen the old horse move before, around a corner, up a side street, down a lane, and, after several more bewildering turns, stopped in front of a red house.

"I think we are safe now," said Dodd, "but this trifling with the Michigan law of shaves is a risky business. We are defying the strength and wisdom of the greatest minds of a great State, — minds that soar always and ever as high as shaves and hair-cuts, leaving trifles to weaker intellects. Hist! Wait!"

With the same exaggerated air of stealth, he left the buggy and approached the house. There Leonard saw him joined by another man, with whom he held an animated conversation. It was evident, however, that the stranger was rejecting all overtures, for he kept shaking his head.

"He's afraid," said Dodd, when he came back.

"He doesn't know me, so he thinks I'm too upright a man to trample the laws of Michigan under foot. Do I look like a detective?"

"You acted like one when you approached the house," laughed Leonard, as he recalled the picture the old man made tiptoeing up the walk.

"Perhaps that's it," said Dodd. "He thought I was trying to lure him into evil ways, just to arrest him. At any rate, he refused to accept me as a pal in the great crime of conspiring to make a fellow mortal presentable for church, the same being against the laws of Michigan and the labour unions. But we have still another chance to get ourselves into trouble."

When nearly home, Dodd turned into a lane and stopped before a barn, where he began calling for "Arthur." Arthur, when he emerged, proved to be a husky farm-hand.

"S-s-sh!" said Dodd. Then, leaning over the seat: "They tell me some of you boys sometimes shave each other."

Arthur looked startled.

"It's all right," Dodd hastened to explain. "I've got a young man here who's anxious to get into the ways of crime himself."

Arthur looked puzzled, but evidently deemed it wise to say nothing.

"He wants to get shaved," Dodd added, "and I'll vouch for him. He'll never give away a pal."

Arthur looked dubious.

"I'd like to oblige any of your people, Mr. Dodd," he said, "but I don't want to get into any trouble."

"That's all right," returned Dodd. "If you just scratch him up a little, he can easily make people believe he shaved himself."

Arthur smiled at this and decided that he would run the risk of fine or imprisonment that the young man from the city might go to church. He got some hot water, escorted Leonard up into the loft of the barn, rigged up a lantern for light, as it was now getting rather dark, and arranged two old chairs, one behind the other. In the first he instructed Leonard to sit; then he placed one foot on a rung of the other, thus bringing his knee high enough to make a head-rest; and in this primitive fashion, his head resting on the knee of the amateur barber, Leonard received his first unlicensed Michigan shave. The arrangement being decidedly awkward, he was somewhat nervous, and he swore softly to himself about the fool lawmakers of the Wolverine State.

"And yet," said Dodd, as they drove home, "it might be worse."



**"LEONARD RECEIVED HIS FIRST UNLICENSED MICHIGAN
SHAVE."**

"How?" asked Leonard.

"Why, they might make a mother take out a license to give her baby a bath," replied Dodd.

"We haven't yet reached the limit of legislation."



CHAPTER X.

THE SERMON AND THE WHISTLE

AT the breakfast-table Sunday morning, Dodd bowed gravely to Leonard and said: "Will you say grace, Mr. Leonard?"

Leonard was startled. He never had been called upon to say grace in his life, and this was the more unexpected because it was not customary in the Dodd household to say grace. Nothing of the sort had been done before during Leonard's stay. Nevertheless, Dodd bowed his head and waited. The others looked up in surprise and then followed his example, although some of them seemed to find Leonard's confusion amusing. Leonard himself was too bewildered to even think connectedly. He bowed his head, but, from necessity, remained silent; he did not know what to say. His face flushed, drops of perspiration stood on his forehead. The others waited, and presently Leonard's voice was heard saying weakly: "May I have a little of the egg, please?"

Dodd gave him an astonished, reproachful glance, but behind it were his twinkling eyes. Some of the others laughed, and some seemed to hesitate between indignation and laughter. Mrs. Dodd, however, was unquestionably on the indignation side, for Dodd was always doing some unexpected thing that distressed her.

"Daniel Dodd," she exclaimed, "will you never reform?"

"No," replied Dodd. "Reform movements are dangerous. We like reform in theory, but not in practice, and it usually paves the way for greater evil. Look at New York. After reform Tammany wins by increased majorities. Look at the average individual. Reform only gives him a greater distance to fall when he wearies of it. I am surprised, Mrs. Dodd, that you should wish me to do so foolish and dangerous a thing as to reform."

"Don't," laughed Leonard. "We much prefer you as you are."

"Indeed we do," added Miss Marsden, "even if you do have a little harmless fun with some of us occasionally."

"That's just the point," asserted Dodd. "It's harmless now, but after a reform it would be vicious. There's nothing worse than an unravelled reform. Now, in my case, never having reformed,

I always feel quite properly penitent for my misdeeds. Just now I am so anxious to make atonement that I extend an invitation to all of you to go to church with me."

Miss Marsden looked at him in some surprise. She had heard that his religion was of the fields rather than the churches.

"Are you a regular attendant?" she asked.

"In the summer," replied Dodd, "I go to church every Sunday."

"Why, Daniel Dodd!" exclaimed his wife. "I don't believe you've been inside of a church in ten years!"

"Oh, *inside* of a church!" repeated Dodd, with an air of innocent surprise. "Of course not. But I go *to* church whenever any one wishes to be driven over, and I stay right there (on the outside) until the whistle blows."

Leonard laughed, but some of the others seemed to be shocked by the irreverent levity of the expression.

"I may go myself," said Leonard, "if service and sermon are not too protracted. I have noticed that when a country minister gets a few people from the city in his congregation, he seems to think that something in the line of extra effort is necessary,

and I imagine it will be pretty hot in church to-day. How long is he likely to preach?"

"Until the whistle blows," replied Dodd, solemnly.

"Daniel Dodd!" exclaimed Mrs. Dodd, severely.

"Now, Emma," returned Dodd, plaintively, "you don't know anything about it, because you never go to church in the summer when we have visitors up here. You tried it once or twice, at first, but you had to admit that your spirit was too worldly to be reached by the words of the good man, especially when there was such distressing uncertainty as to when he would quit. You know perfectly well that during the last half of the sermon you were always wondering whether dinner would be spoiled by the time we got back to it."

The laugh that followed this showed that other women could appreciate Mrs. Dodd's predicament, but some of them were still doubtful about the propriety of the reference to the whistle.

"If you could lift yourself out of the kitchen," Dodd went on, "and give the thought to church affairs that I do, you would know that more than half the people who go to Old Mission Sunday mornings during the summer go there to see the weekly boat from Chicago come in, and merely drop into the church to pass away the time. When the

boat whistles, they start for the dock. The preacher has been wise enough to understand the futility of trying to hand out even the best brand of salvation in the face of the arrival of a steamer that may leave a new man for the girls or a new girl for the men or a woman with gowns that can be criticized by all the others of her sex, so he shuts off quick and hurls the benediction after the retreating congregation. That's what I mean by saying that church lasts until the whistle blows. It's literally true. After the first five minutes of the sermon, it is a mere matter of listening for the whistle, and even the preacher keeps one ear cocked for it."

"Mr. Dodd," explained Mrs. Dodd, apologetically, "is utterly unregenerate."

"Why, Emma," expostulated Dodd, "I have always been particular to observe the Sabbath just as other men do."

"How is that?" asked Leonard.

"By putting on clean underclothing and a higher collar," replied Dodd, in his serious way, which greatly increased the effect of his unexpected remarks. "I have noticed that in many circles, especially in the city, a man's reverence is gauged by the height of his Sunday collar, and in my poor, weak way I do the best I can, although my neck

isn't long enough to give me the very best standing."

Mrs. Dodd laughed indulgently, for, in spite of her protests, she had deep affection and sincere admiration for her kindly, quaint husband, and she had long before learned how useless it was to attempt to curb him.

Later, when Dodd was driving those who wished to attend church to Old Mission, Leonard undertook to draw him out a little more.

"I suppose, Mr. Dodd," he said, "that, aside from the question of high collars, you have your own way of observing the Sabbath."

"Oh, yes," replied Dodd. "I always try to keep my thoughts and conversation within appropriate limitations. So far as possible, I think of the moral and really commendable things that I have done or tried to do, but, unfortunately, I ran out of material within two Sundays after I laid down this rule, and I've had to keep going over the same ground ever since. To-day I am keeping properly solemn by thinking of the time I quit smoking."

"That was a commendable thing to do," remarked Miss Marsden.

"I suppose so," replied Dodd, lugubriously.

"Don't you know it?" she insisted.

"The evidence is conflicting," explained Dodd.

"You see, it was about the way it is when any man quits smoking: the people who don't have to associate with him commend his moral strength, and those who do can only say, 'For heaven's sake! take a cigar and look pleasant! You give me the blues!' The second day after I quit, I gave my entire attention to snapping customers' heads off and throwing them in the waste-basket. At the close of business that day, I had acquired nothing but a needless supply of temper and the ill-will of everybody I had met. It took three years of smoking to get back the business that I lost in one week of abstinence. However, it eased my conscience a little to find that smoking was not a luxury or a vice, but a business necessity. It gave me the upper hand in my dealings with my conscience, and I've been mighty careful to keep it ever since."

Dodd seemed offended by the laughter that greeted this, for he looked reproachfully at Leonard, who sat beside him, and then at the others on the seats behind.

"That isn't a joke," he said; "that is merely a statement of one of the sad truths of life. We're wrecked by the trifles. I get just as mad if a cow goes dry as I would if the house burned down, — go the limit on the trifle and have nothing left. One way or another, we're all like old Pete Flint.

Pete was the most fluent and artistic cusser that I ever heard. I never did believe much in cussing, but I can rip out a few unpolished words when things go wrong, and that's where I've always had the best of Pete. In the swearing line, Pete is one of these continuous shows, and mighty strenuous. He can't say three words without two of them being cuss-words, — wasting his ammunition just like a boy with a new gun and a few cartridges. Well, one day things went wrong with Pete, — very much wrong. His barn blew down, a peddler beat him out of two dollars, and a neighbour threatened to sue him for trespass. Pete was livid with rage; he shook his fist in the neighbour's face, his jaws worked, but he didn't say anything. Then he just lay down on the ground and began to cry. Happening along about then, I asked him what was the matter.

“‘I'm all in,’ he said, despairingly.

“‘Hurt?’ I asked.

“‘Not in my body,’ he said, ‘but in my feelings. I've been cussing so blamed much, Dodd, that I ain't got a blamed word left to show how mad I am.’”

“Is that story quite suited to the day, Mr. Dodd?” asked one of the ladies in the back of the carryall.

"Of course," replied Dodd. "It has a fine moral to it."

"What's the moral?"

"Don't be wasteful, even of cuss-words! Hold something in reserve for the really big affairs of life! But we don't; we let the trifles wear us out and use up all our resources. That's why the farmer shows his age more than the city man: he has more of the little annoyances to keep him constantly irritated."

At the door of the church Miss Marsden asked Dodd if he wouldn't establish a new precedent by going in.

"No," he replied; "I'll stay out here and watch the horses."

"Do the horses have to be watched?" she queried.

"On Sundays," he told her, confidentially, "I like to pretend they do."

Then he drove the team under the spreading branches of a big tree, hitched it, and made himself comfortable in the shade, where he was presently joined by Leonard.

"I got to the door," explained Leonard, "but it looked too hot inside and too cool over here."

"It's a funny thing," commented Dodd, "that we're urged to keep out of hell by going to the hottest place we can find on Sundays."

Then he made himself comfortable, with his back against a tree, lit a cigar, and smoked in meditative silence, while Leonard stretched himself full length on the grass. It was an ideal place and an ideal day for meditation. The music from the church and the rustling of the leaves were all that broke the silence, except as a horse stirred occasionally. Dodd, apparently, was busy with one of those queer problems that gave him so much pleasure, and Leonard was idly wondering whether Miss Marsden thought he should or should not have left after the little scene when she so confused him. Of course it was a matter of no importance, but — he wondered. She seemed to have such very decided opinions, although she never obtruded them, and there seemed to be no uncertainty as to her own course of action under any circumstances. Yet, under this unusual resourcefulness, there was the womanly charm that is so attractive to the normal man; she had strength without aggressiveness.

“If she could only be a little lazier occasionally,” sighed Leonard. “Why, her fingers are busy with fancy work as she sits beside her sister’s hammock, and she can’t even go to the woods without collecting pine-needles for a sofa-cushion. However, it doesn’t concern me.”

But he kept on wondering just the same, until

it dawned on him that it must be time for church to be dismissed, and he looked at his watch.

"The service ought to be over by this time," he remarked.

Dodd slowly roused himself from his own little reverie until he was able to grasp the import of what Leonard had said.

"No whistle yet," he returned.

"But the boat may be late," said Leonard.

"The boat is late," replied Dodd.

"Do you really mean to say that he'll preach until he hears the whistle?"

"If he can."

"And if he can't?"

"He'll piece out with prayer. You see, it has become so much a matter of custom to have the boat whistle end the service that he just naturally doesn't know when to stop without it. It's an illustration of the way habit clutches and holds us. Or you might say that he's a sort of religious engineer: keeps full steam ahead until he gets the signal to back up. Sometimes I've thought it might be a good idea to sue the steamboat company for the dinners that are spoiled when the boat is late. There have been times when Mrs. Dodd and various other housewives would cheerfully have drowned

the captain, although he's usually on time or a little ahead of it."

Meanwhile there was restlessness in the church, for Dodd had not greatly exaggerated conditions. A summer congregation at Old Mission could no more be held after the steamer's whistle was heard than could a stampeded herd of cattle, and, as the steamer usually came in about the time the service ended, the minister had learned to give the same attention to it that the congregation did. Indeed, having had to cut his closing sentences on a few occasions, he had unconsciously acquired the habit of hurrying a little in order that the steamer might not beat him to the finish. Thus the whistle had become a sort of guide.

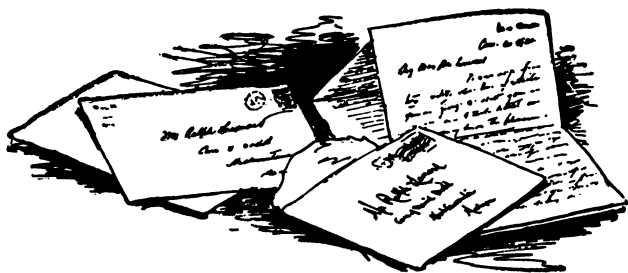
But to-day the boat was late. The minister preached and listened. Usually there came to him faintly over the water a first whistle, to which those of the congregation who heard it paid no attention, but there was just time between this and the whistle, as the boat approached the dock, for the closing prayer. He was waiting for this whistle, but it did not come, and he was like a man who had lost his reckoning in the woods. He wandered anxiously and uncertainly through the rhetorical forest, listening ever for the sound that would show him the way out. On and on he wandered, while his

listeners stirred uneasily and looked at their watches, until he found that he was going over the same trail twice. Then he stopped abruptly, abandoned his sermon and began to pray. But here again he was lost. There seemed no way to stop without the customary signal, so strong is habit, although, if he had looked over his congregation, he might have seen that every head was turned so that the whistle could not escape the waiting ear. He prayed for the congregation, for himself, for Old Mission, for Peninsula County, for the State of Michigan, for the lake sailors, for the United States, for North America, and —

The whistle was heard. Loud and clear it came to the weary and restless worshippers, showing that the boat was approaching the dock and the preliminary whistle had not been heard.

“Amen!” said the parson, quickly, and a great, combined sigh of relief went up.

“I have always feared some such tragedy as this,” said Dodd, as they drove home, “and I have thought some of suggesting that an imitation steamer’s whistle be put on the dock, in order that no serious consequences ashore would follow an accident to the boat. As matters are now, one runs a great risk.”



CHAPTER XI.

THREE LETTERS

LEONARD had decided that in one thing Miss Marsden was right — a man really ought to have some occupation. It need not be a very engrossing occupation, but the days should not be entirely objectless. Consequently, Leonard took upon himself the duty of meeting the mail-carrier every afternoon. There really was no reason why any one should meet the mail-carrier, for, under the rural free delivery system, every family has a mail-box, nailed to a post at the side of the road, where the mail may be left until it is convenient for some one to come from the house to get it. But it gave Leonard a little interest in life to feel that there was a certain thing to do at a certain time, so he strolled down to the road and waited in the shade of a tree

for the "R. F. D. man," as the carrier was designated.

He was comfortably settled here one afternoon, when Dodd drove along on his way to see a neighbour about a little business matter.

"Whoa!" said Dodd to his horse, and, when the latter had stopped, he leaned over with the air of a man having a serious purpose in view.

"Waiting for the mail?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Leonard.

"While you have been waiting for the mail day after day," said Dodd, "did you ever stop to think how many thousands of miles of travel the rural free delivery system saves the farmers of the country?"

Leonard gasped at the magnitude of the problem thus suddenly presented to him.

"Never," he replied at last.

"I supposed not," said Dodd. "There are few people who know how to be entertaining to themselves. Now, in my own case, I figure that I used to travel 1,800 miles a year to get my mail before we had the rural free delivery, because we had a good deal of mail, and went for it more regularly than some of the others. On the other hand, there were many who had a much greater distance to go, so very likely it would average up to at least

1,500 miles a year for each family in the whole district. For a hundred families that would mean 150,000 miles a year. But, while most of our trips were made for the mail, we had to make occasional trips for supplies, and these we still have to make. Possibly one in every four of the old trips are still necessary, leaving only three saved, or about 112,000 miles a year. But that is only for a very small district, right about here. Just extend your district from the lighthouse to Traverse City, and you'll have some figures that are really interesting, and yet it takes only two carriers to cover the whole peninsula. Having finished the peninsula, a little investigation would give you an excellent basis on which to estimate the saving in the State of Michigan, and from that — ”

“Whoa! Back up!” cried Leonard. “Do you want me to drown myself in a sea of figures?”

“No,” replied Dodd. “I merely wanted to give you a little entertainment. You'll find statistics as to rural population in my office library, and it ought not to be difficult to learn the limits of the rural free delivery system. Then you will have the basis of an enjoyable mental occupation that will keep you from being lonely all summer. I don't like to see people getting rusty.”

Dodd touched the horse with the whip, and a

moment later was jogging along down the road, while Leonard looked after him in wonder.

"I'll bet *you* never get rusty," mused Leonard, and then it occurred to him that there was something pathetic in this old fellow, with his active mind and the wreck of his plans, struggling with his hands to keep things going. It was the more sympathy-compelling because of Dodd's cheerfulness in the face of worries and conditions that could not fail to be exceptionally trying to him; he never complained; there was no bitterness in his heart; and yet the very problems that he devised and solved showed a mind that was ever seeking to escape the restrictions entailed by existing conditions.

"He's the only one of the kind," laughed Leonard; "the model was lost. But there are few men in this world who could bow to adverse fate and accept disheartening conditions as gracefully as he does. I rather think he's more of a hero than some of the men the poets have sung about."

The appearance of the mail-cart in the distance stopped these meditations, and Leonard walked along the road to meet it. Receiving the Dodd mail, he sorted out the letters that were for himself and put the rest in his pockets. His own letters he read as he walked back to the house.

The first was from a lawyer, who had been his

father's intimate friend and his own adviser and representative in all business matters. He merely glanced at this envelope and then put it under the others.

"Business!" he soliloquized. "Alvord never writes on anything but business. Let it wait."

The next envelope was addressed in a feminine hand.

"Now, what does Edith want?" he went on. "Is it my income or me or just a little amusement?"

Edith was a "butterfly of fashion" — a girl who had been taught that her mission in life was to use such charms as nature and society had given her to capture the largest income within reach, taking with it such incumbrance in the way of a man as might be necessary. She was pretty, vivacious, and mercenary, but, aside from matrimony, it is probable that she never had had a serious thought. Leonard had flirted with her after an idle fashion, there being a feeling that the flirtation might drift into something serious. It had been a sort of sparing for time, while each looked to see what other opportunities there might be. It would have taken very little to have made what society would have termed "a brilliant match" of it at that time, but somehow they had parted still undecided, and the

flirtation had resulted only in a correspondence that made anything or nothing a future possibility.

In the letter he was addressed as "My dear Hermit," and upbraided for hiding himself away from all the people worth knowing. She was writing, she said, in their favourite woodland nook of the summer before, which was the next best thing to having him there. Then she told him how much gayer it was than the summer before, and what splendid opportunities there were for enjoyment, — boating, dances, drives, tennis, golf, swimming, woodland walks, and about everything else in the line of pleasurable occupation. All in all, her letter was an indirect but unmistakable invitation to come to her.

He tore it up, with an impatient exclamation. A short time before he would have gone, glad of the chance to renew the flirtation at close range and under such favourable auspices. But it annoyed him now. She led such an utterly useless and objectless life. So did he, for that matter, but — well, he had grown weary of it and was going to do something. Not just then, but some day. Of course he would begin right away if he only knew what to attempt, but there wasn't much to do in the summer, anyway. Still, admitting his own shortcomings, he looked at Edith from an entirely differ-

ent view-point now, and she did not please him as she had done before. His ideal, although hazy, had changed; it was not enough that a woman should be pretty, dress well, and entertain cleverly.

The third letter was from a Chicago friend, who told him he was making the mistake of his life in searching for pleasure elsewhere. "Nothing doing here but fun," he wrote. "Two summer extravaganzas running, lots of pretty girls, and no one left in town to criticize you for anything you may choose to do. Cool evenings for drives and lively times at the summer gardens. Just enough of the right kind of men at the clubs to make things interesting. Better comb the hay out of your hair and come back to life."

Leonard tore this letter up, also. He realized that the conditions pictured ought to prove alluring, but they did not. He was somewhat surprised to find that he preferred to stay at Old Mission. True, he had planned to spend most of the summer there, telling himself that he was weary of the livelier and more worldly pleasures, but the plans he made for the summer were usually abandoned by the first of July, and he acted on impulse thereafter. Yet this time he was sticking to a very prosaic programme.

"Why should I give myself the bother of mak-

ing a change?" he mused, with a laugh. "It's easier to stay here."

He took the rest of the mail to the house, and then settled himself in a hammock to read the lawyer's letter.

"Dreadful bore," he thought. "Alvord's always criticizing the management of the bank, but it was good enough for father, and I don't know where I could get as good returns on the money invested."

He overlooked the fact that his father, in his lifetime, had been an officer of the bank, and consequently in a position to protect his investment, but this was suddenly impressed upon him when he read the letter. The bank had failed.

"You will recall," Alvord wrote, "that I always advised against carrying all your eggs in one basket. I did not think it wise even in your father's case, and it was a much greater risk after his death. However, nothing is to be gained by taking up that question now. The bank is closed, and its affairs are reported to be in a very serious condition, owing to erratic and reckless management and the effort on the part of one of its officers (now supposed to be headed for some South American country) to get rich in a hurry. It is impossible, at this writing, to say how far the assets will go toward covering the liabilities, but it is my personal opinion that the

depositors will get little and the stockholders nothing. This, however, is a mere surmise. It will be some time before the receiver is able to make a report, and he may find things in much better condition than now seems probable. But, at best, you must expect to stand a very considerable loss. As your presence will in no way improve the situation, I see no reason why you should return to the city at this time, as I shall watch matters, and can send for you whenever your interests require it. I presume you have enough cash for current expenses. If not, you may draw on me for what you need. As a depositor, you will get something in time, even if you get nothing as a stockholder; but, taking the liberty of an old friend of your father's, I would suggest that you give some thought this summer to the question of a business occupation, for I tell you frankly that you are pretty certain to need one. I shall be glad to give you any assistance I can when you have reached a decision, but of course there are practically no opportunities during the hot months. That is why I suggest that you might as well stay where you are unless you hear from me to the contrary."

The suddenness and severity of the blow dazed Leonard. His predicament was even more serious than the lawyer supposed, for he had little cash with

him and his bank-account was carried in the collapsed institution. This was now beyond his reach, at least temporarily. And he, whose sole activities up to date had been in the line of college athletics, golf, and polo, was confronted with the task of earning his own living. There might be enough saved from the wreck to help a little, but even that was doubtful.

He was too dazed to think connectedly. Sitting in the hammock, still holding the letter in his hand, he looked vacantly into space, while his mind jumped from one thing to another. Then he got up and walked down into the woods toward Terrace Cottage, and somehow the walking seemed to clear his head a little. What should he do? What could he do? He had had a good education, but no practical experience in any line; he had been an idler. Fortunately, he thought, the college graduate was more in demand than ever before; business men were beginning to realize that, all else being equal, the college man had a better foundation for success than the one who began business earlier, and the great corporations had reached the point of actually favouring him. This he had read, and he had also seen something of it. He knew that one fellow, in needy circumstances, had been engaged almost at the door of the university, and

he had been advanced rapidly. He had to begin low, but his college training told very quickly; he was what business men called "good material," capable of understanding and of thinking for himself, as soon as a little of his self-consciousness and conceit had been rubbed off. And, counting from the day of his graduation, Leonard had lost only two or three years. Why could not he, starting a little later, do as well as others? He had the health and the strength and the mental ability, if only he could decide how to apply them. It would be rather difficult to come down to a small salary basis of living, but surely he could do it, if only he could find the occupation that promised something.

"I'll go back to the city at once," he decided. Then he recalled what Alvord had said, and the reason of it was apparent to him. Opportunities were few and far between during the summer months, and living in the city would be more costly than living on the farm. The friends who might help him were nearly all away, and business was at a low ebb. Men were discharged rather than employed at such a season. It would be better to wait until there was a need of willing workers and a chance to reach those in authority, now away on vacations. In the meanwhile, he might write to some of those whom he could reasonably expect

to be friendly to him, explain the situation, and inform them that any honourable employment, having something of promise for the future in it, would be acceptable to him. His father had had many business friends who would surely do what they could to give or get employment for the son, and some of these he himself knew quite well.

"But," he argued, "the fellow who expects to do well in any kind of a new stunt has to go into training. Work is going to be a new stunt for me, and the harder the training I get this summer, the better the record I will be able to make next fall. I ought to go back now, get any old job there is, and train myself for the real business that is to follow. I've got to get used to the restrictions and the office hours and the monotony before I'll be of any use at all. Besides, I can't stay here, for I haven't the money, and I certainly don't like the idea of borrowing any from Alvord. It will have to come out of the little that's saved from the wreck of the bank, and the smaller the inroads I make into that, the better for me. If I've got to earn a living or part of a living, I can't begin to practise the stunt any too soon."

Leonard was waking up, although he did not fully appreciate the fact. He had the energy, he had the ability, he had the courage, but all had been

dormant. After the first shock of the news, he had spent no time in repining; he had been bewildered and uncertain, but he gave his thought to the future rather than the past. The circumstances were such that he needed to be forced, to have a difficult and necessary task ahead of him.

"I've got to do something while waiting," he said. "If there's nothing here, why —"

He stopped short in his walk.

"Great thunder!" he exclaimed. "They're just crying for help here, and where can I go into training for work better than on a farm! I've got to practise working — just plain working at anything — and I'll bet Dodd would rather have a farm-hand than a boarder. I'll hunt him up."

He turned back and seemed almost cheerful as he walked rapidly to the house. It was something to have solved the first incidental problem of the new situation; it was also something to have solved it so that he did not have to leave Dodd's farm immediately, but he did not tell himself why a solution that kept him here was especially pleasing to him. Perhaps he did not reason it out.

But Leonard's walk and manner had changed completely within the space of a few hours: he had really waked up, or perhaps it would be better to say that he had been awakened.

CHAPTER XII.

LEONARD GOES INTO TRAINING

Dodd was sitting on the porch, placidly smoking a cigar when Leonard found him. Standing in the house drive was a horse and wagon, evidently the property of a man who was talking excitedly to Dodd. The man, approaching the porch, gesticulated wildly, while Dodd's interest seemed to be centred in his cigar.

"We did the work, didn't we?" demanded the man.

Dodd nodded.

"Well, I want my money," the man declared.

"And I want my jackscrew," said Dodd.

"I don't know anything about your jackscrew!" asserted the man.

"Then you'd better find out something about it," said Dodd, pleasantly.

"There's an old, unclaimed jackscrew down at High's place, below Neahtawanta," the man suggested.

"That isn't mine," returned Dodd. "My jackscrew wasn't an old one."

"Oh, this is a good jackscrew, all right enough," said the man. "I didn't mean old in the sense that it is useless."

"I suppose," remarked Dodd, thoughtfully, "that the job at High's was the last one you had to do on the peninsula."

"What makes you think that?" demanded the man.

"Because you wouldn't have been thoughtless enough to leave my jackscrew behind if you had had any further use for it."

"Oh, devil take the old jackscrew, anyway!" exclaimed the man. "I haven't got time to bother with it. I want the cash for repairing your wind-mill."

"And I want my jackscrew," persisted Dodd, still placidly smoking.

"I've told you where it is," said the man.

"But it isn't here," said Dodd.

"Do you expect me to go for it?" the man asked, angrily.

"No; oh, no," replied Dodd. "Since I've lived on this peninsula I've learned not to expect anybody to return anything of mine. We'll just call the

jackscrew yours, and you give me a receipt for the windmill job."

"What!" the man fairly yelled.

"Oh, suit yourself," said Dodd, conciliatorily. "If you'd rather return the jackscrew and get cash for the job, it's all the same to me."

"You have to drive to Neahtawanta every little while," urged the man, "and you can get it yourself."

"I can," admitted Dodd, "but I won't." Thus far he had spoken as if the matter were one that did not interest him particularly, but now he put a little more earnestness into his tone and manner. "I naturally supposed that you had your own equipment for your own work, although my experience in Michigan ought to have taught me better, but you needed a jackscrew, and I provided one. Then one of your men wanted to borrow the jackscrew, to use on the job over at Ben Tainter's place. It seemed to me that I had done my share in providing tools for the job I was paying for, but I let him have the jackscrew. Of course, he was going to return it. Well, I waited a week, and then I went over to Tainter's. Your men had gone on to Sibley's, taking the jackscrew with them. I drove to Sibley's the next day, but they had moved along to Gregg's. Then I quit. You see," confidentially,

"I've pretty near reached the limit on this borrowing business. I've been wondering ever since I got up here what the people did before we came. Why, when I want to do a little work in my garden, it's more than an even chance that I'll have to walk or drive two or three miles to get the garden tools some neighbour borrowed a week before. I'm keeping one ice-cream freezer just to loan now. We brought one with us when we came, but we never could keep it with us after the neighbours heard about it, and we got so tired chasing it up that we bought another for our own use."

"Don't the neighbours get that one, too?" asked Leonard, breaking into a conversation that had been sufficiently amusing to divert his mind from his own troubles.

Dodd winked solemnly.

"The neighbours don't know about it," he explained. "When one of them comes to borrow our freezer, I just say: 'Why, certainly. Glad to let you have it. Just run right over to Tainter's, and tell him to let you take it.' I've been loaning that old freezer right along for three years since I last saw it. It never gets home any more, and I keep track of it in a little book, so that I can always tell where to send the next man who wants it. But," he added, turning suddenly on the windmill man,

"the freezer is the limit; I'm not going to buy another jackscrew just to be clever to windmill men."

"I'll sue you for the bill," the man threatened.

"And I'll have you arrested for larceny as bailee," returned Dodd, with perfect good humour.

"That will liven things up a bit, and some of the boarders have been complaining that it's pretty dull here."

The windmill man was angry, but he knew that this quiet, whimsical old fellow had the best of him.

"If I bring the jackscrew back, will you pay me?" he asked.

"You bring it back," said Dodd, "and, if it's mine and in good condition, and you say 'Thank you' or 'Much obliged,' or something else to show that you can appreciate clever treatment, I'll pay your bill."

The man did not know whether to be angry or not. The words seemed harsh, but the tone and manner were mild and conciliatory.

"But if you're not polite about it," added Dodd, gently reproving, "I shall have to charge you rental for the time you have had the jackscrew."

The windmill man seemed on the point of exploding, but he finally turned to his wagon without

a word. His experience with Dodd had not been such as to encourage him to any further effort.

"I hate to do that," said Dodd, turning to Leonard, "but it's for his own good, as we say when we reprove children, and, besides, I want the jack-screw."

Leonard smiled, and then reverted to his own troubles.

"Mr. Dodd," he said, "you need more help here, don't you?"

Dodd leaned over and caught Leonard by the arm, speaking with humourously impressive earnestness.

"Have you found a man?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Wait!" said Dodd, rising. "I'll get out the old double-barrelled shotgun that scatters over an entire county, and we'll put this fellow to work, or fix him so that he won't sit down all summer. It's loaded with rock salt."

"It isn't necessary in this case," returned Leonard. "The man wants to go to work for you."

"I like fairy-tales in their proper place," said Dodd, ruefully, "but I don't like to have them put forward as facts."

"This is not a fairy-tale, Mr. Dodd," asserted Leonard, earnestly. "I am the man, and I want

to go to work on the farm. I don't know much about the work, but I'll do my best."

Dodd looked at him quizzically.

"Well, now, I've had people with all kinds of whims here," he remarked; "I've had people who wanted occupation of one kind or another, but never before one who wanted a useful occupation. Don't you know it's bad form to tackle anything that's more than just exercise in the vacation season? If you must work to be happy, try something in the line of sport, but don't upset the whole theory of civilization by making yourself useful."

"I'm in earnest, Mr. Dodd," Leonard persisted.

"Who would have thought," said Dodd, musingly, "that one useful woman could have so quickly made a useful man!"

"You misunderstand the situation entirely," returned Leonard, flushing. "It is not a whim, but a necessity. I've got to go to work at something. The bank has busted."

Dodd's manner changed instantly.

"The bank in which your money is invested?" he asked.

"That's it," replied Leonard. "I don't know how much will be saved from the wreck, but there's no more idleness for me."

"You are discouraged," said Dodd, kindly. "It

has come so suddenly that it has upset you, or you never would talk of going to work on a farm. There are other opportunities for a man of your ability and energy. Take time for thought before deciding on a course of action."

"While I am thinking," said Leonard, "why should I not have a temporary occupation? It seems to me advisable to stay here for the present."

"Let us go to my little old study and talk it over," Dodd advised, taking him by the arm. "If you will permit me, I shall be glad to advise you. I have some financial knowledge, you know, as a result of my earlier experience, and it would seem to me that your affairs may need your personal attention."

This was said with a gentleness and courtesy that made Leonard feel that he had found a real friend, — sympathetic, tactful, wise.

They went to the little study where Dodd had his desk, long unused, and his reference books, and there Leonard explained the situation and produced Alvord's letter.

"This Alvord is a man that you can trust implicitly?" asked Dodd.

"Oh, unquestionably," replied Leonard.

"Then it seems to me that you cannot do better

than to follow his advice and stay here," said Dodd. "But why should you go to work on the farm?"

"I have told you that I have practically no money left, for one thing."

"I do not see how that affects the situation at all," returned Dodd. "We all take pleasure in doing things for our friends."

"But I am only a boarder — a summer boarder, and —"

"Friendships," interrupted Dodd, "are of uncertain growth. One may learn to know a friend in a single night, or it may take years. We have seen a good deal of each other in the short time you have been here, and I have hoped to count you as something more than a boarder."

This was so unexpected, and real sympathy so strongly affects one in the moment of adversity, that Leonard felt a little moisture in his eyes, as he impulsively took Dodd's hand.

"Besides," Dodd added, before Leonard could speak, "there should be a bond of fellowship in the fact that both our banks have gone to the same hell."

The transition was so sudden that it forced a laugh from Leonard, which was just what Dodd wished. It is so awkward to be thanked by a man who feels deeply.

"Why hell?" asked Leonard.

"That's where bad banks must go," said Dodd, "and a bank that fails must be a bad one. I only wish I'd known of the departure of yours in time to send a message to mine. I'd like to know whether the receiver went there with it. If he did, it would take away some of the bitterness."

"Before I can thank you," said Leonard, "you have me laughing, and before I'm through laughing you again have my heart filled with gratitude. But really, Mr. Dodd, I can't remain here as a guest. I want to go to work. I want to move out to the quarters of the other hands, and show that I'm the real thing. If you won't consent to that, I shall have to go."

"Why?" asked Dodd, simply.

"Because," replied Leonard, as he recalled his own argument to himself, "I want to go into training. I don't know how to work; I'm not in proper physical or mental condition for continued effort in one line, and I want to put myself in such condition before I return to the city and take up business. Any regular work will be helpful. But we won't call it work, if that seems to put a doubt on your friendship; we'll say that I'm going into training for the most important athletic feat of my life, and that you're going to be my trainer."

Surely you can't refuse to accept the position of trainer."

"You put it very cleverly," said Dodd, with a smile, "and I'll have to admit that there is a good deal of truth in what you say. A habit of work is mighty valuable. So I'll take you on as one of the hands, but you'll keep your present room and —"

"I'll do nothing of the kind," interrupted Leonard, decisively. "I'm going to be a farm-hand, live with the farm-hands, and eat with the farm-hands. I can't live on one plan and work on the other; I can't come to your guests' table in my farm clothes, and they would shy off from me when I met them in the halls. A man coming in from the fields has no business mixing up with them until he has changed his clothes. And the hours of the meals are different. I'm in earnest, Mr. Dodd; I'm not going into this for play, and I don't want to be put in the position of seeming to do it that way. In fact, I'll go back to the city first, taking with me a most grateful memory of what will seem to me your misapplied generosity."

Dodd was sorely troubled. His was a generous nature that made him wish to help any one who was unfortunate, and he was the more anxious to do so in this case because there was much in Leonard that he really liked. The young man seemed

to understand, appreciate, and like him, and Dodd had talked more freely with him than with any one else who had been to the farm in several years. They had enjoyed each other's company in a quiet way, and had been together as much as circumstances would permit. Consequently, the idea of sending the young man to the men's quarters distressed Dodd, although he perfectly understood the other's point of view.

"It shall be as you wish," he said, finally, "although I shall regret to lose you from the main house. I'll turn you over to the head man tomorrow."

"With instructions to treat me like any other farm-hand?"

"Yes."

"And pay me what I'm worth,—not a cent more?"

"No more and no less."

"Thank you, Mr. Dodd. You can show your friendship in no way that I will appreciate more."

"But there is one stipulation I would like to make," said Dodd.

"What is that?"

"It is a favour to me," explained Dodd, with that natural courtesy that was one of his greatest charms. "I would like to have as much of your

company as you can conveniently give me without interfering with your work. I shall hope to have you as my guest at the main house all day Sunday and any and all evenings that you are not too tired. If you will grant me this much, I will agree to leave you entirely to the mercies of the head farmer in all matters of work."

They shook hands on the bargain, and each thought the better of the other for it. As a matter of self-respect, the young man wished to stand on his own merits, and Dodd had delicately recognized this when he agreed to leave him absolutely to the head farmer.

"There's something to that fellow," said Dodd to himself.

And Leonard, on his part, saw how cleverly Dodd had made so much of a guest of him as was possible, and clothed it all in the pleasing fiction of a favour to himself.

"A finer man never lived," was the way Leonard put it in his musings. "I wish I could show how strongly I feel that."

CHAPTER XIII.

A GENERAL MISUNDERSTANDING



MISS MARSDEN was annoyed to find that she was disappointed in Leonard. She told herself that there was no reason why she should have any feeling one way or another, but she was distinctly disappointed. He was clever, entertaining, and very manly in appearance, but that was not enough. A man of energy and purpose was needed to command her respect, and she had begun to think that there was something of this back of his indolence. He had talked of doing something, — and then he had gone to work on the farm.

“So childishly theatrical and absurd!” she commented.

For it seemed to Jessie Marsden that Leonard was making this a part of an attempted flirtation. By nature and the necessities of her previous life she was industrious herself; she believed in work; she had expressed an admiration for men who worked, and intimated a certain contempt for idlers. So he had ostentatiously gone to work as a farm-hand.

Miss Marsden was not ordinarily egotistical, but in this case the circumstances certainly seemed to warrant her conclusion. Leonard had made one or two amusing attempts to do a little work as a divertimento, and had failed. He had shown a very decided liking for her society and a considerable interest in her views of life and work. She had rather hoped, without putting the hope in words, that he would really prove his worth; in fact, she had expected him to do so. And she was disappointed. He had been unable to rise above a silly and spectacular thing, the main point being, apparently, that it should be done under her eyes.

"I thought there was more to him than that," she mused, "and yet, why should I? And what difference does it make? If he chooses to be ridiculous, let him. I hate people who pose for effect!"

Incidentally, Mrs. Congrove made matters worse. Mrs. Congrove had improved considerably during

their stay at Old Mission, and, while still preferring to be alone with her sister most of the time, their walks and talks and the occasional companionship of Dodd and Leonard had aroused her to an interest in the things happening about her, — a condition of affairs for which Miss Marsden was striving. So she had not failed to notice the seemingly extraordinary course pursued by Leonard.

“Jessie,” she said, “you certainly have a mission in life that I never suspected. You ought to devote yourself to the task of getting lazy people to work. Why, you had me sorting cherries, and now you’ve got Mr. Leonard in overalls.”

“What have I to do with that?” asked Jessie, innocently.

“Why, your industry and your views have made him ashamed of himself. He’s doing it for you.”

“I hope not,” returned Jessie, with an irritableness that was unusual. “It’s no compliment that a girl should inspire a man to make a fool of himself.”

“Why, Jessie, that’s the average girl’s mission in life,” protested Mrs. Congrove. “They’re always leading men to do just that thing.”

“I disclaim all responsibility in this case,” insisted Jessie.

“You can’t,” asserted Mrs. Congrove. “What

else could possibly have put him to work in this romantic way?"

"Idiotic way!" retorted Jessie. Strangely emphatic was Jessie in expressing her disapprobation. Ordinarily she was very tolerant of what seemed to her shortcomings in others. She had her own views, but she seldom criticized individuals, although she might find fault occasionally with tendencies and customs. Yet there was a sense of personal vexation in this instance. "Let the boy alone," she added, after a moment. "He wants to play farmer, and why should we interfere with children at play? If he isn't equal to a man's game, we can only be sorry for him."

Mrs. Congrove looked at her sister and smiled. She had found a method of teasing the ordinarily imperturbable Jessie.

Meanwhile, Leonard had entered upon his duties with a great deal of enthusiasm. As a matter of fact, Leonard did not yet fully appreciate his loss. He never had cared for money, because he always had had it; he had no ambition for great wealth, and he never had been a spendthrift. Money represented only a certain amount of comfort and pleasure. If he could have the comfort and pleasure desired for the moment without money, why, money ceased to be of any earthly importance. And

just at this moment he was perfectly contented to go to work on the farm, — in fact, he was rather pleased to have the excuse for doing so. He believed it would demonstrate an earnestness and energy that he wished to show he possessed. It never occurred to him that the fact that others lacked knowledge of the reason for his action would lead them to put a disagreeable interpretation upon it, — an interpretation that made him look silly. With an instinctive dislike to having his private affairs made the subject of idle gossip, he had pledged Dodd to secrecy, and left the others to speculate as to why he should go to work on the farm.

“I guess he’s going to write a book,” said Dodd, when questioned. “This is the age of realism, you know, and a fellow has got to have the experiences he gives his characters. But there are some writers I could mention who do not seem to carry it far enough.”

“In what way?” he was asked.

“Why, it would be a boon to humanity if they’d have themselves killed in order to get a proper comprehension of the sensations. And then,” he added, “there are others who fail to make the most of their opportunities. I’ve been expecting to have some absconder put in the plea that he didn’t want

the money, but was only after the feelings and sensations of a hunted criminal, in order that he might make his forthcoming book realistic. You can put up 'the interests of art' as an excuse for almost anything these days."

But Leonard remained sublimely unconscious of all this. It would be a mistake to say that he was not greatly worried by thoughts of the future, but he was not so greatly worried as most young men would have been in his case, because the present situation suited him reasonably well, and he never had been accustomed to give much thought to the future. In brief, he was rather proud of the way he adapted himself to circumstances, and, since he had solved the first problem that confronted him, poverty had not seemed as serious a matter as it had at first. The work was no more than a novel vacation experience. He had worked as hard in athletics, and had been much more uncomfortable in camp. He was solemn, however, when he settled down to write to the various business men who might be of assistance to him. This brought home to him the fact that he was not going to be able to "break training," as he did after a football game or a boat-race. Circumstances might give zest to this preliminary practice, but it was another thing to confront a complete and permanent

change in his whole manner of life. After writing the letters, explaining his situation and his needs, and expressing a willingness to work hard at anything that offered, he went for a long, moody walk in the woods. But the next day he was again looking on the bright side of the affair, and joking with Ben Ackerman as if he hadn't a care in the world.

The work was a pretty serious strain on Leonard at first. He was physically sound and strong, but he was out of practice, and the exertion made his muscles ache. Consequently, he was seen little at the main house, being too tired to care for the association of the boarders. He had occasional chats with Dodd out at the barn or the carriage-shed, and he learned to know something of Ackerman, the man Dodd had captured in the road, and who now had the next room to Leonard. In truth, Leonard found Ackerman interesting. The man was a Hercules without looking it, and as good-natured as he was strong. He had made his reputation with the other men by putting one long arm around the arms and body of the strongest of them and carrying him away as if he had been a child caught up under its mother's arm, and he had demonstrated his ability to handle bags and barrels as no other farm-hand could. He was rough, good-hearted, and faithful,—the kind of a man who

would dare anything, do anything, for a friend. And he had a great liking and admiration for Leonard, and was, indeed, proud of the chance to associate with him. The latter was a gentleman, but unassuming. Ackerman's experience with so-called gentlemen had given him the impression that they were supercilious and patronizing. But Leonard was unquestionably a gentleman, and he was companionable and democratic.

So strong was Ackerman's liking and so sincere his admiration that he gratefully accepted suggestions from Leonard that he would have resented in his own forceful way from another.

"If I had to eat with those people at the big house," he told Leonard one day, "I'd throw a fit. I wouldn't know what to do."

"It's not so important to know what to do as to know what not to do," laughed Leonard. "If you ever have to eat with them, you might begin by not eating with your knife."

Leonard sat next to Ackerman at the men's table, and the rash way the latter handled his knife was really distressing. Others there were who were somewhat careless, but they were not directly under Leonard's eye, and they were not quite so fearless of consequences.

"Say, it ain't the fashion to eat with the fingers,

is it?" asked Ackerman. "I used to do that, but I quit."

"Why not try the fork?" suggested Leonard. "Careless handling of the knife at table makes some people nervous."

Ackerman, while not quarrelsome, did not take kindly to criticism from most people, but he meekly laid down both knife and fork and watched Leonard for a few minutes. Then he tried to imitate him, and thereafter he studied to handle his "tools," as he called them, properly. No greater proof of admiration and friendship could Ackerman give any one, for thus eating ceased to be a pleasure to him. In other ways, too, he imitated Leonard.

"I can't ever win," he said, "but I might as well make a stagger at the real thing. I always did wish I was a gentleman."

"To be a man — a real man — is a finer thing," returned Leonard. "There are too many alleged men who are merely male bipeds."

"I guess that's all right," said Ackerman, looking puzzled, "but I don't jest get you."

But, in another quarter, Leonard found much to trouble him. The first time he dined at the main house he discovered that Miss Marsden was regarding him with mild amusement. She asked him

about the farm work much as she would have asked a child about its doll-house.

"It has been rumoured," she said, "that you are writing a book, but I rather incline to the belief that you are planning to go on the stage."

"Why so?" he asked.

"Oh, this going to work is so thrillingly dramatic," she answered. "Such nobleness would get wild applause from the galleries."

"Then it is only you," he retorted, warmly, "who has the right to work when and how you please."

"Oh, no!" she answered. "Any one has a right to strike an attitude and cry, 'Behold! I will prove my worth by hoeing potatoes!' But it is difficult to make a drama out of a comedy. Still, you may learn to play the horny-handed son of toil well enough to catch the galleries."

"I am sorry," he said, "that my present occupation is too lowly to suit you."

Retiring to his room, Leonard muttered: "She isn't as sincere as the flighty girls of fashion. They at least make no pretence of ignoring station and honouring work, while she — Oh, I suppose she made a mental reservation that the work must be genteel." He laughed scornfully and somewhat bitterly.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Congrove was expressing her astonishment.

"Why, Jessie Marsden!" she exclaimed, "you're just as capricious and inconsistent as any other girl! The idea of showing such resentment over a matter that does not concern you!"

"It was foolish," admitted Jessie, meekly. "I don't understand why I did it myself. I think it must be a little matter of personal pique because my judgment was so much at fault. Perhaps I really did hope that he would do something, — not merely pretend to do something."

Mrs. Congrove smiled knowingly.

"If you value the independence of spinsterhood, perhaps it is a good thing for you that he has failed to rise to the occasion," she said.

"Don't be silly, Gracie," retorted Jessie. "I'll ignore him so far as possible after this."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PROWESS OF ACKERMAN

THE weather conditions having given Leonard and Ackerman a day off, and Dodd being in need of certain things from Elk Rapids, the two men offered to make the trip, and Dodd gladly consented. So attired as to make rain a question of little moment to them, they hunted up Dodd for final instructions, and found him talking to the windmill man. The jackscrew had just been returned.

"If I were a mean man," said Dodd, examining it critically, "I'd charge you something. It's all here, but it's had pretty hard usage, and won't last me as long as it should."

"You promised the money when I brought the jackscrew back," said the windmill man, "and this is the first time I've been able to get up here since."

"That arrangement of ours isn't outlawed by the statute of limitations yet, is it?" asked Dodd, eagerly.

"No, it isn't," answered the man, who had no

sense of humour, and found Dodd simply inexplicable.

"Because," said Dodd, "I'd just as soon you'd keep the jackscrew and let me off on the windmill job."

"Well, I won't do it. You've given me enough trouble already."

"Of course the jackscrew business was no annoyance to me," remarked Dodd. "I made two trips to get it, but I guess I needed the exercise. Is there anything else?"

"What should there be?"

"I didn't know but you had forgotten something."

"No."

"Oh, all right." Dodd began to count out the money, but he withheld the last five dollars of the amount.

"Five dollars short," said the man.

"Oh, that's all right," returned Dodd.

"No, it isn't all right," the man asserted aggressively.

Dodd toyed carelessly with a five-dollar bill, and looked at the windmill man.

"Are you sure you haven't forgotten anything?" he asked.

The man's mind reverted to their previous conversation, and his face got red.

"Oh, much obliged for the use of the jackscrew," he said.

"Ah!" remarked Dodd, handing over the bill. "Now you see how truly it is said that politeness pays."

When the man had gone, Dodd turned to Leonard and said, with a deep, dismal sigh: "It is hard to be schoolmaster to so large a class. But there are so many who really need the lessons!"

Then he told them what he wished them to get at Elk Rapids, — some supplies not to be had at Old Mission, — and they started.

Dodd offered to drive them to Old Mission, where they took the boat across the bay, but they refused to permit this. With big boots and mackintoshes and old slouch hats, the rain and mud were matters of no moment to them; in fact, there is some joy in sloshing around when one is dressed for it. Besides, they were doomed to a wetting, anyway. But they were tough-looking specimens when they reached Old Mission, and it was not surprising that people on the dock rather avoided them. On the boat, too, they were left very much to themselves, although they could not fail to notice that they were receiving considerable attention from a

distance. The other passengers stood about in little groups, whispering and gesticulating.

Now, Ackerman had a code of ethics peculiarly his own. He was ordinarily good-natured, and he had been known to laugh at affronts that would make another man fight, but he also had been known to fight when another would have laughed. In the Ackerman code it was the extreme of discourtesy to make a stranger the object of whispered criticisms or furtive glances, and intentional discourtesy was something to be resented quickly and sharply.

"Think I'm the prize ox at a cattle show?" he demanded, suddenly approaching one of the groups.

"Why, no," the man nearest to him replied, conciliatorily. "We was jest wonderin' if you wasn't strangers in these parts."

"We been here longer'n you think," retorted Ackerman, whereat the men exchanged quick, meaning glances that puzzled Leonard. "An' I guess we're strong enough to stay till we get ready to go," he added. "If anybody has any objections, I'll stand him on his head."

"We didn't mean no harm," the stranger hastened to explain. "I s'pose you're goin' over to see where the robbery was."

"What if we are!" demanded Ackerman, al-

though he hadn't the faintest idea what the man was talking about.

"Oh, we're all goin'," said the man. "Everybody's goin' that can git away from work. It's queer how those desperadoes got away so easy."

"It don't take much of a man to get away from people up here," retorted Ackerman. Then, suddenly: "Look the other way! We ain't a beauty show!"

The man addressed and those nearest to him turned their heads so suddenly as to be in danger of dislocating their necks, whereupon Ackerman, feeling that he had sufficiently asserted his dignity, returned to Leonard. Ackerman realized nothing except that some people were "getting gay," as he expressed it, but the affair had deeper significance to Leonard.

"Ben," he said, "there's been trouble at Elk Rapids, and those people think we're the guilty men."

It took a moment for Ackerman to grasp this. Then he laughed.

"And what you said," added Leonard, "made the matter worse. I'll bet they try to arrest us at Elk Rapids. There isn't a soul on board who knows me, and it's my first trip to the Rapids."

"Oh, won't it be a great scrap!" exclaimed Ackerman, enthusiastically.

"We look like desperadoes, too," persisted Leonard.

"Let's act like 'em," urged Ackerman. "I'm dyin' for a little fun."

"Well, I'm not," asserted Leonard. "These peace-loving people are nasty when they get going. They trail the people they're after with barrel-staves, pitchforks, and muzzle-loading shotguns, but you bet they get them and bring them back, if it's only in sections."

"I don't usually back up," returned Ackerman, regretfully, "but I don't want to get *you* into trouble."

"I don't mind trouble when there's reason for it," explained Leonard, "but I don't want to get in a country jail, and I don't want to make a cross-country run in front of all the men and dogs of an entire township. We'll have to find some way to show who we are."

"Oh, all right," said Ackerman, resignedly. "I don't look for trouble, but I don't dodge it, an' I been in the habit of havin' excitement about once in so often. I'm due now, an' these people makin' fools of themselves looked like Providence. There

probably won't be another chance for fun this summer. But I'm ready to back up for your sake."

Leonard laughed and suggested that their very earnest conversation already had attracted further attention, and that it would be advisable to be a little less serious. So they laughed and chatted carelessly during the rest of the trip.

The rain had lightened to a steady drizzle when they reached Elk Rapids, but it was still sufficient to make all who had not business out-of-doors seek shelter, and they anticipated little trouble to escape the curious and suspicious eyes that had followed them on the boat. In this they were mistaken, however. The news seemed to spread rapidly, and they still found themselves the objects of disagreeable attention. Leonard tried to counteract this by talking of Dodd and Old Mission when they were within the hearing of any one else, but this did not have the desired effect. In a store they visited they overheard comment that was disquieting.

"They wouldn't dare come back," one man was saying.

"That's jest what they'd do," was the reply. "Those kind of fellers ain't afraid of anything. They got nerve. They'd come back and hold up the town if they thought they'd missed anything."

Besides, this is jest where nobody'd be looking for 'em."

At the hotel they learned the details of the affair. Two fruit-buyers had arrived late, carrying considerable cash, which they had deposited in the safe in the hotel office for want of a better place. The safe had been blown open during the night, evidently by men who were following the fruit-buyers, the money taken, and a running fight with the marshal and a few citizens had resulted, in which one of the citizens had been shot and dangerously wounded. This, following a series of robberies at Traverse City, had convinced the people that there was a desperate gang in the vicinity. The robbers had worn masks, had temporarily eluded their pursuers, and finally had escaped in a stolen sailboat, going in the direction of Old Mission.

"No wonder they suspect us," commented Leonard. "We are unknown, we are coming from that direction, we show that we have been tramping through the mud, and, all in all, we are tough-looking characters. I'd suspect myself, if I happened to be some one else, especially as we are buying supplies. The natural inference is that the gang has its headquarters on the peninsula."

Ackerman said nothing. He was beginning to feel the thrill of anticipated conflict, and the strong,

resourceful, undefeated man is always in high spirits when an unsolicited chance to show his prowess seems to be coming his way. In truth, it must be admitted that Ackerman was so far unloyal to Leonard as to endeavour, in various indirect ways, to strengthen the suspicions already created. It seemed to him a good joke. Consequently, he said things and did things that, innocent in themselves, might not be so interpreted. That there might be any serious menace to himself in this never for a moment occurred to him.

Their purchases being made, there was some time to wait before the boat started back, and Ackerman discovered that he had a thirst. Leonard confessed that he could think of no better way to pass the time, in view of the circumstances, than over a bottle of beer — or something stronger, if desired. While temperate, Leonard was decidedly not a prohibitionist, and he led the way to a place that advertised liquid refreshments. It being a matter of thirst and time to spare rather than need of artificial exhilaration, they established themselves comfortably at a small table, with a bottle of beer, and presently were laughing over their experience as suspected criminals. They had not failed to note that the barkeeper had put the bung-starter within easy reach when they entered the place.

It was so near the time for their departure that even Leonard had ceased to be anxious, and neither of them paid much attention to the five men who entered and went direct to the bar. It never occurred to them that these men were after the reward that had been offered for the arrest of the desperadoes. They knew that they were suspected in a general sort of way, but they did not know that one of the men who had caught a fleeting glimpse of the robbers asserted that they closely resembled the mud-covered strangers. It does not take much to identify men in a time of excitement.

The new arrivals ordered drinks and chatted with the barkeeper. Incidentally, they moved restlessly about and drew nearer to the table at which Leonard and Ackerman sat. Leonard was the larger, and looked to be the stronger, of the two, so the plans of the would-be captors were laid accordingly. At a signal, three of them sprang on him, upset him and his chair, and piled on top of him. At the same moment, the other two sprang for Ackerman, but they missed connections. Ackerman was as quick as he was strong. The big, strong man is usually clumsy, the little, strong man active, and Ackerman was, if anything, a little below medium height. Furthermore, he happened to glance up as the signal was given. He might be mentally

slow in some ways, but he knew instinctively and by experience what to do in a row. He was on his feet, tipping his chair over backwards, before either of the men could reach him; he lunged forward, escaping the charge of one man, caught the other about the waist and hurled him half-way across the room. Turning instantly, he ducked under the arms of the first, and when he straightened up the man came up with him, crying out in pain as he felt himself crushed in a fierce embrace. Just how he accomplished his next feat, no one ever was able to explain, least of all the victim, but Ackerman said he had done the thing many times in sport. He turned the man over and brought him head down on the floor.

“Back up!” he cried, as a sort of general warning. “If a man moves, I’ll break this feller’s neck!”

The action had been so bewildering, so startling, so spectacular, that it caught and held the attention of every one. Leonard was powerless beneath the three, and the three, still holding him, could only stare in amazement at the spectacle of a man, head down, about to be used as a sort of pile-driver. There could be no possible doubt of Ackerman’s ability to break the fellow’s neck at any moment. In fact, Ackerman bumped his head a little, just to



"IF A MAN MOVES, I'LL BREAK THIS FELLER'S NECK!"

convince him of the inadvisability of trying to grasp his legs and thus trip him up. The fifth man lay where he had been thrown, and the barkeeper, coming with the bung-starter, stopped short. Ackerman, holding his man upside down by the legs, was master of the situation.

"Hands up, or there's a dead man here!" cried Ackerman.

"For God's sake, let me up!" whined his victim, as Ackerman bumped him a little to emphasize his demands.

"Hands up, quick!" shouted Ackerman.

The barkeeper's hands went up; the three on top of Leonard rolled off and, sitting on the floor, shot their hands into the air; the one who had been thrown lay on his back with his hands raised. It was so ludicrous a scene that Leonard often laughed at it afterward, but he was not disposed to laugh at the time.

"Search 'em!" ordered Ackerman.

Leonard confiscated two revolvers, a billy, and the bung-starter. Then Ackerman let go of his victim's feet, and the fellow flopped over on the floor.

"Say! wasn't that great!" exclaimed Ackerman, a happy, satisfied grin on his face. "I ain't had so much fun since sister had the mumps. What'll we do with 'em?"

Leonard was leaning against the wall with a revolver in each hand, fearful that some one would enter to complicate matters before they could get the affair straightened out. Fortunately, however, it was a dull hour in the saloon business.

"We've got to settle this thing now," he said.

"Don't shoot!" wailed one of the men. "We won't try to foller you."

"Shoot!" exclaimed Leonard. "Who wants to shoot! All I want is to get out of it without shooting. Keep your hands up!" he cautioned. Then he went on: "I suppose you think we're the fellows who blew open the hotel safe."

"Well, yes," was the hesitating admission.

"Well, we're not. We're employees of Daniel Dodd, over on the peninsula. Do you believe it?"

"Yes," quickly, from all of them.

"Because if you don't," put in Ackerman, "why, we'll —"

"We do," they cried.

Then Leonard, still troubled, had an inspiration.

"Get the letters out of my pocket," he instructed Ackerman. "I'd rather not put these guns down just yet." Ackerman pulled out half a dozen letters. "Show them to them," Leonard continued. "They're all addressed to me at Dodd's."

"I got one myself," said Ackerman.

Ackerman, seeming to enjoy the situation, went from one to the other and showed them each envelope in turn.

"If that isn't enough," persisted Leonard, "you may send a committee back to the Mission with us, — as big a committee as you want, only there must be no funny business."

"We're satisfied," asserted the man who had been stood on his head.

"Have a drink on the house," urged the bar-keeper.

"All right," returned Leonard, "but you've got to send somebody to the boat with us, to tell people we're all right. We don't want anybody else trying to arrest us."

"We'll all go," they declared.

"Still, as a precaution," said Leonard, "I'll just keep the revolvers until we're aboard."

They lined up to the bar and drank boisterously to each other's health, the reaction from the tension of the last few minutes finding vent in noisy demonstration. Ackerman alone did not seem to feel this sense of relief. He was merely exuberantly happy, as a boy might be after emerging from some college sport in which he had been victorious.

"We ain't so bad in a scrimmage — when we get waked up," he laughed.

"You're not," one of the others admitted.
"You're a wonder."

"Me!" exclaimed Ackerman. "Oh, I'm fair, but you ought to see this man," indicating Leonard, "when he gets started. He's the only feller that can handle me, an' the only man I duck to. But nobody can't do anything when three big men pile on to him from behind before he knows what's coming."

Leonard started to expostulate, but Ackerman winked at him and he held his tongue. When they were alone, their late antagonists having left them with every token of distinguished consideration and respectful admiration, Ackerman said: "Might as well have the reputation for bein' a devil in a fight."

"But I'm for peace," urged Leonard.

"Sure," returned Ackerman. "An' the easiest way to have peace is to get the reputation of bein' able to lick the tar out of everybody. Things has been so peaceful for me sometimes that I've had to move."

CHAPTER XV.

DODD DISCUSSES WOMAN

THE news of the exploit at Elk Rapids spread rapidly. From the lighthouse to Neahtawanta people were talking of the wonderful prowess of Leonard and Ackerman, and Leonard ranked first in all discussions. What Ackerman could do had been demonstrated, and Ackerman had confessed that Leonard could handle him. Therefore, Leonard must be just about the greatest man that ever lived. When he went to Old Mission, people turned to look after him on the street; if he met a farmer on a country road, the man bowed to him deferentially and admiringly, as he would to some hero. There was no one who was not proud to claim his acquaintance.

While this was amusing, it was also annoying. Leonard had no wish to sail under false colours, but Ackerman considered it a good joke, and so did Dodd and all the men at the farm. In fact, Ackerman lost no chance to strengthen this idea,

detailing imaginary exploits whenever opportunity offered.

"I wish," complained Leonard, "that I could stop this thing. Of course, here on the farm we all see the absurdity of it, but they don't elsewhere, and some day I'll be called on to live up to my reputation."

"Not any," retorted Ackerman. "Nobody's goin' to try to make you live up to the reputation you got now, 'cause they're all afraid. They want to keep you nice an' peaceful."

Even Dodd chuckled over the affair, and assured Leonard that there was no man on the peninsula who would not cheerfully agree with him on any subject upon which he appeared to have decided opinions.

"You're a good deal like a good-natured mastiff," explained Dodd. "Everybody's proud to know you and to pat you on the head while you continue good-natured, but they're more than half afraid something may annoy you, and you'll growl. They want to humour you all the time."

Miss Marsden alone seemed to take a different view of the matter, although she said nothing. She treated him with studied politeness, but it was very evident that his course did not meet her approval. She never joined in the jocular comment the affair

provoked, either in his presence or his absence. She never referred to it in any way, until she was directly addressed on one occasion. Then Dodd was given a gentle shock that, if he had been observing, he might have avoided.

"The reflected glory of our Hercules," he remarked, "is making me feel pretty big myself."

"Our real Hercules," she returned, quietly, apparently deeply interested in the crochet-needles she was using, "modestly passes the glory on to some one else. Heroes are proverbially modest."

Dodd looked dreamily into space.

"It's a good joke," he ventured at last.

"But don't you rather like the man who stands solely on his own merits?" she asked. "It must be so much more satisfactory to be made great by one's own acts."

Again Dodd looked dreamily into space.

"I think it will rain," he said.

"When?" she asked, looking up, quickly.

"I am not much of a prophet," replied Dodd, "but I think it will rain before it snows."

Dodd was wise enough to understand, and he was also wise enough to attempt no explanation or defence. There are occasions when silence is better than the presentation of even the most convincing case. Under cover of Miss Marsden's amusement

at his weather prediction, Dodd retired gracefully. But he was not to escape this entanglement so easily, for, as he and Leonard smoked after dinner, before returning to work, Leonard asked him a very simple but disquieting question.

"Mr. Dodd," he said, "have I shown myself a silly, pretentious fool, or a man?"

"Very much of a man," replied Dodd.

"Thank you," said Leonard, simply. "I have learned to value your opinion highly, and I did not think I could be so far wrong as — another seems to think. If you are right, then she —"

"Yes?" said Dodd, quietly.

"— is as insincere and worldly as any of the frivolous girls I have known."

Dodd looked dreamily into space, even as he had done before.

"Perhaps you do her an injustice," he suggested, in his gentle way.

"Well, it's of no moment," returned Leonard, forcing himself to speak lightly. "She may not think so much of a farm-hand as she does of a man of leisure, but my plans were made for myself."

Again Dodd deemed it wise to sheer off, at least slightly, by turning the conversation to woman in general, which is always an allowable and interesting topic.

"Woman," he said, "is a strange and puzzling creature, who is always giving new perplexities to man. Woman makes you think she thinks what she doesn't think, so the best thing to do is to think she doesn't think what she seems to think. Do I make myself clear?"

"Perfectly," answered Leonard, forced to smile at this tangle of "thinks."

"She's quite honest about it in most cases," Dodd went on. "She really doesn't know that she doesn't think what she thinks she thinks, so she makes herself unhappy without cause, and gives all sorts of wrong impressions, and — Do I make myself clear?"

"As clear as a thunder-cloud on a dark night," replied Leonard.

"That's all right, then," asserted Dodd. "All you've got to do is to keep your eye on the place where you think that thunder-cloud is, and in the morning you'll be surprised to find there's nothing but sunlight there."

Thus Dodd cleverly laid the foundation for much of comfort that had its effect later, although, at the moment, Leonard failed to untangle the remarks, and was merely amused.

"Does a reasonable, or even an intimate, knowl-

edge of one woman qualify you to speak thus authoritatively of the sex?" asked the young man.

Dodd leaned toward him and spoke confidentially.

"Woman," he said, "is so inconsistent, contradictory, and many-sided that a careful and protracted study of one wife is as good as being a Mormon. The Sultan of Turkey hasn't discovered any more of the peculiarities of the sex than I have."

Dodd looked about him furtively and became even more confidential.

"If you don't think I'm right," he whispered, "come with me and I'll show you a little feminine idiosyncrasy that the Sultan of Turkey never saw. It's just about time."

Taking the surprised and amused Leonard by the arm, he cautiously led the way to the woodshed. There, concealed by a pile of wood, he certainly did point out a most extraordinary sight.

Mrs. Dodd was seated on the kitchen steps, with a bottle of medicine on one side of her and a basket on the other. She held a medicine dropper, which she was carefully filling from the bottle.

"Come, Hannah!" she called at last, whereupon the cook appeared. "Hold her tight this time, Hannah," Mrs. Dodd went on. "She doesn't like

it, but it's good for her. She's getting better right along."

Hannah reached into the basket and took out a cat. The cat struggled.

"Hold her tight," Mrs. Dodd cautioned again. "The last time I know she didn't get the full dose."

Hannah held the struggling cat in her lap, and Mrs. Dodd steadied the cat's head with one hand, while she dropped the medicine into its mouth as opportunity offered, meanwhile soothing the disgusted feline with soft words.

"There!" she said at last. "You got it all that time, and you'll be all right in another day."

She took the sputtering cat from Hannah and gently replaced it in the basket.

"The show is over," announced Dodd, suddenly appearing from behind the wood-pile. His wife laughed in a constrained way. "Mrs. Dodd's weakness," he went on, "is a desire to relieve suffering and help the helpless. Any dumb creature in trouble appeals to her sympathies, and she has more original ways of aiding them than twenty men could think of in a year of Sundays. When she doesn't know what to do, she experiments. I don't think she ever has prescribed for the horses or the cows, but pretty nearly every other living thing has received her

ministrations. I've known her to nurse a wounded bird for weeks."

"But the poor thing would have died if I hadn't taken charge of it," urged Mrs. Dodd.

"And as for chickens —"

"Now, Dan'!!" interrupted Mrs. Dodd, reddening.

"As for chickens," repeated Dodd, maliciously, "I could tell you of a time when she ground up a liver pill and mixed it with the chicken food, after diagnosing the trouble of one of the hens."

"Dan'!!" she cautioned.

"Well, you did, didn't you?" he demanded.

"Yes, I did," she retorted, defiantly. "And the chicken got well, didn't it?"

"It did," he admitted.

"Well, then!" she exclaimed, triumphantly.

"My dear," he said, contritely, "you entirely misinterpret the purpose of my remarks. I am not trying to make fun of you; I am merely calling attention to the transcendent genius that could discover that a liver pill would do a chicken good. I don't think anything like it ever before has been known in the history of the world."

"But it cured the chicken," she insisted.

"It did," he conceded, "and ever since you have discovered the interchangeableness of foods and

remedies, I've been half-expecting that some day you'd try dog biscuit on me as a cure for indigestion."

"Come into the house," laughed Mrs. Dodd, "and I'll give you a commission that will turn your mind into other channels."

He meekly followed her into the house, while Leonard went back to his work, inwardly laughing at the idea of feeding chickens ground-up liver pills, and dosing a cat with a medicine dropper.

"Dan'l," said Mrs. Dodd, when she had told him of the things she wished done, "it's becoming very awkward."

"What is?" he asked, innocently.

"Why, Mr. Leonard and Miss Marsden," she explained.

"Oh, they are 'it,'" he remarked.

"You know what I mean," she said. "They are so frigidly civil to each other that it's worse than a row. There's something between them."

"Emma," returned Dodd, with exaggerated impressiveness, "you are right. There is something between them."

"Do you know what it is?" she asked.

"I do," he replied.

"Is it serious?"

"The most serious thing in the world," he said.

She waited, but he volunteered no information.

"Is it a secret?" she asked.

"A most remarkable secret," he answered; "so remarkable that I am the only one that knows it."

"They have confided in you?"

"They couldn't, because they don't know it themselves. It is my exclusive secret."

"Are you crazy, Dan'1!" she demanded. "What are you talking about?"

"The thing that has come between them," he said, with amusing impressiveness, "is l-o-v-e. Let them alone and they'll find it out for themselves. They told me without knowing it. And you women," he added, patronizingly, "who pride yourselves on reading such riddles, let an old man — and a farmer at that — find this out first."

"Go on out and see to your berries!" ordered Mrs. Dodd. "You're getting more unbearable every day."

But an affectionate smile followed him as he retreated.

CHAPTER XVI.

A FAVOUR FOR A NEIGHBOUR

Dodd was at his customary work in the vegetable garden. He had not the strength for heavy work in the fields, and, although he assisted in gathering and packing the fruit, his close personal attention was largely given to raising the vegetables that were among the luxuries of life on the Dodd farm. These were not for market, but for home consumption.

Dodd exercised a general supervision over the farm work, but the head farmer was in active charge, so the old man had ample time for the no less necessary work nearer the house. Now he leaned on his hoe and listened. Mrs. Dodd was calling.

"Halloo!" he answered. "What is it?"

"Some one to see you!" answered Mrs. Dodd through a small megaphone kept for just this purpose.

"Man or woman?" asked Dodd.

"Man."

"Can he walk?"

"Yes."

"Well, here I am."

Dodd was so obliging that he would walk half a mile to meet a man who wanted to ask a favour of him, and only that morning Mrs. Dodd had suggested that he ought to be a little more careful of his own time and strength. This was his method of letting her know that he had taken the lesson to heart, — at least temporarily. He would forget all about it in another day, and walk a mile for the privilege of loaning some one a rake. However, in this case the man came to him. He proved to be Erastus Dutton, who lived some miles away.

Dutton nodded to Dodd and remarked that it was a nice day. Dodd examined the heavens critically and admitted that Dutton was right. Then Dutton chewed a straw, while Dodd leaned meditatively on his hoe. Dodd was wondering whether Dutton had come to borrow his churn or a wagon. The last time he had appeared he had asked if Dodd remembered the tonic Mrs. Dodd had recommended for his wife, and, learning that Dodd's memory was treacherous, he had recalled the circumstances and dilated on the wonderful properties of that remedy.

"I'll never forget it," he had said, in conclusion.

"Mrs. Dutton took every drop of it," as if that entitled her to the gratitude of the Dodds, "and now could you loan me your plough?"

Such were the details of the previous call, and Dutton's hesitation now seemed to indicate a desire for an even greater favour. So Dodd leaned on his hoe, and inwardly hoped that the man didn't want any of the things over which Mrs. Dodd had supervision, for Mrs. Dodd had become weary of loaning, and Dodd knew he would have some trouble in arranging matters. Dutton, however, branched off into the question of crops, and for ten or fifteen minutes they speculated on the amount of fruit that would go to market from Peninsula County.

"I got to raise some money to git my apples to market at all," Dutton remarked, finally. "Don't know anybody that's got any to lend, do ye?"

"They've got plenty of schoolma'ams' money at the bank," replied Dodd.

Dutton looked bewildered.

"Whose money?" he asked.

"Schoolma'ams'," answered Dodd. "Didn't you ever stop to think who the real capitalists of the country are?"

"Rockyfeller, Morgan —"

"The schoolma'ams," interrupted Dodd. "The

schoolma'ams are the great money-savers, considering them generally. No one of them may have much, but collectively they have a lot, and it's their money that the big financiers use in their deals. Others, with more money individually, are using it for their own purposes, and it's the school-teachers' money that the banks have to loan. The schoolma'ams move the crops in the fall, and, unknowingly, they furnish the cash for other great and necessary movements in the business and financial worlds. When you hear about the banks furnishing the money to move the crops, just you sit down and laugh, for the schoolma'ams are doing it. The thing for you to do is to get some of their money."

Dutton shook his head.

- "There's not less than a thousand dollars in my apples, Dodd," he said, "but I couldn't sell 'em on the trees, an' that makes it look bad to people with money. I borrowed a little on the crop earlier too, an' I've got to pay that loan, if I make another, or the man will come down on me. Ye see, I got behind last year."

"How much have you got to have?" asked Dodd.

"Three hundred and fifty dollars, to pay the other loan and get the apples to market. You can fix it for me at Traverse, Dodd, if you will."

Dodd looked troubled. As a banker, he had been

able to be impersonal and cautious, but his ready sympathy and generous heart had got him into trouble occasionally in his personal affairs, and he had declared that he would turn and run at the next financial suggestion from a friend or neighbour. In brief, he had proved himself a better guardian of other people's money than of his own.

"If the crop holds as good as it looks now, I only got to deliver 'em in Chicago to git a thousand dollars for 'em," Dutton persisted. "A Chicago commission man will take 'em all at the market price, delivered, if they grade right."

"But he wouldn't buy them on the trees," mused Dodd, doubtfully.

"I'll show you the letter from the commission man," said Dutton.

Dodd read the letter, but made no comment. The letter and Dutton's report of his crop, which Dodd knew to be approximately correct, seemed to make the loan a safe one. But a storm might wreck everything. That possibility made bankers cautious.

"I got to raise the money, Dodd," Dutton added. "There's a little interest on a mortgage on the farm besides. I got to do it or I'm busted. They'll listen to you at Traverse, for you was a banker once."

Dodd glanced at Dutton's pathetically anxious face, put the hoe over his shoulder, and started toward the house.

"We'll try it," he said.

They are astir early in the country, and there was yet time to catch the boat at Neahtawanta. During the drive to that point, Dutton was profuse in his thanks, but Dodd spoke little. It was not that he begrudged the day lost from work on the farm, for he said drily that he was always looking for a good excuse to miss a little work; it was not that he did not want to help a neighbour, for he cheerfully put himself to great personal inconvenience for them. But he knew his own weakness, and he feared he might do something of which Mrs. Dodd would not approve.

At Traverse City they hunted up a banker whom Dodd knew, and stated the case to him.

"I don't see how we can do it," he said. "There ought to be no difficulty in selling a good crop on the trees, which means ready money and no expense in getting the apples to market."

"There are too many larger orchards to be had," explained Dutton. "They won't touch anything less than a \$1,500 crop on that basis this year. And my trees are bearing unevenly, so it is rather

hard to figure. But I have made a careful personal estimate."

"There are several possibilities that might spoil all calculations," argued the banker. "The risk is too great. We can't do it. I'd like to oblige Mr. Dodd, but my first duty is to the bank."

Dodd glanced at Dutton and saw that there were tears in his eyes. Evidently he had not exaggerated his predicament.

"I'm very sorry," the banker added.

"No matter," said Dodd, carelessly. "We can get the money elsewhere."

He took Dutton by the arm and led him to the Park Place Hotel. The man had been so confident that Dodd could arrange the matter that the disappointment left him on the verge of collapse. He sank into a chair in the corner of the reading-room and buried his face in his hands.

"Wait here," said Dodd, gently. "I'll see what I can do."

Then Dodd went back to the banker alone.

"Don't you think I was right, Mr. Dodd?" asked the banker. "You have had experience in this business yourself."

"Why, no," replied Dodd, frankly. "I think you were entirely wrong, but I didn't come back to argue the question with you. It is your privilege

to do business your own way, and I have taken out no license to find fault. I merely came in to tell you that the north end of my farm is for sale. I understand there are some people with money up here this summer, and somebody may want a summer home. If so, you'll hear about it."

"I'll do the best I can for you," said the banker. "But why do you think I made a mistake in refusing the loan?"

Thus he came back to the subject, even as Dodd had wished and planned.

"Why, it is my experience," replied Dodd, "that there are two kinds of finance, — high finance and straight finance, — and the rules that should be applied to them differ materially. Too many small bankers follow the rules of the Wall Street bankers, who are dealing largely with gamblers, and have to be unusually careful. If a man came to me to borrow money to put a stock-jobbing deal through, I'd be damn careful and damn cold-blooded. At best, the money will do good to no one but himself. At worst, you are not the only banker on his list. He has fifty ways of raising money. But the farmer who wants to move his crops has only one. He must go to the one banker he knows, and refusal there leaves him at the limit of his resources. He needs the money for himself, but it is also to help in

a movement that is of benefit to others." He leaned forward and became emphatic. "As a banker, I would never refuse the honest man who wants a small loan, for he is the man who is going to put the money to good use. I would give it to him on as long time as he wants for this reason: when he has the money, he will pay, even if it is ahead of time, and you will get double use of the money. If, as is sometimes the case, he decides not to pay until the note falls due, he will deposit the money in your bank, and here again you have double use of it, — once on his loan and once on his deposit. That is something you never get from the man of high finance, who is using the money for his own purposes every minute that it is in his possession."

"There is truth in what you say," remarked the banker, thoughtfully. "The small borrower frequently does leave the money in our bank while waiting for his note to be due, and thus we may loan it again and get double interest. But that is no reason for making loans that are uncertain of payment."

"And there is another thing," said Dodd, ignoring the last remark.

"What is that?"

"When you turn down the man who wants a

small loan for his crops, he goes away with the thought, 'Well, it's a hell of a bank that hasn't \$350 to spare!' and his friends and others take the same view of it. It doesn't help a bank any."

"But we have got it to spare!" exclaimed the banker, hotly.

"Oh, I know that," returned Dodd, carelessly, "but all farmers haven't been in the banking business. They can't see why a man in the banking business should refuse a loan of \$350 on a thousand dollars' worth of apples, if he has the money, and sometimes it's worth while to stretch a point to convince them that you've got it to spare."

There was enough of hard sense in what Dodd said to make the banker do a little hard thinking. City banks and country banks have to look at many things from different points of view, for different interpretations are put on their actions, due to the difference in their patrons. And that comment that Dodd had put into the mouth of the man refused rankled. It was just the comment that might be expected from men who believed that no more than a reasonable request had been made.

"If you believe it's a safe loan, Dodd, indorse the note and I'll let him have the money," said the banker.

Dodd looked at the banker and smiled, whimsically.

"I'm pretty hard up myself," he suggested.

"Even so," laughed the banker, as he saw how he had put Dodd in a corner, "I'll feel a little safer if I have two honest men on the note, for, whatever happens, one or the other will pay it in time. Besides, you insist that it's safe."

"I said it was a good investment for a banker," replied Dodd, "but it's no investment for me. I get nothing but the risk."

"Well, if you won't take it for friendship, I won't take it for business," returned the banker.

Dodd sighed.

"I knew I was a fool to leave the farm to-day," he said. Then he added: "Have the papers ready, and I'll be back with Dutton in about fifteen minutes. I know he's got the apples."

It was no doubt of Dutton that made him hesitate. There was a risk, of course, but Dutton was honest. Indorsing another's note, however, is unwise, as any financier will tell you. The indorser has a chance to lose and no chance to win; the best he can do is to get out even. Like many another, Dodd had long before determined that he never would put his name on another man's note, but Dutton was in such deep distress that —

“Lord help me if Emma hears about this!” mused Dodd. “She’ll take me into court and have a guardian appointed.”

But he forgot his doubts when he saw the way Dutton’s face lighted up and felt the clasp of his hand. Even if it came to the worst, it was worth \$350 to give a fellow human such relief and joy, — that is, it was worth it, if a man had the \$350. But Dodd had it not.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SHETLAND PONY FARM



LEONARD joined the Dodd circle at the evening meal less and less frequently, apparently preferring to be with Ackerman and the others at the men's quarters. For breakfast and dinner this was a necessity, as he would hardly join

the Dodds in his working clothes, even if Dodd himself did so. Dodd's work was of a nature which permitted him to keep himself somewhat more presentable than was possible in the case of the farm-hands, and, besides, he was a privileged character. He came in a little ahead of the others, "spruced himself up a bit," as he expressed it, and was ready to join

the guests. But Leonard felt that he had to make a complete change of clothing, and he pleaded this as an excuse for keeping pretty close to the men's quarters, although he might easily have joined the Dodd circle in the evening. He really was too tired to appear many evenings, but he certainly would have been seen oftener if he and Miss Marsden had been on better terms. As it was, they continued to be studiously and coldly polite, and such association is worse than joyless. Miss Marsden believed that he had deliberately accepted the laurels that belonged to Ackerman, and this, combined with what she considered his childish effort to "play at being a man," was more than she could overlook. She demanded sincerity and purpose in a man, — real purpose and not the mere pretence of it. That he stuck to his disagreeable work was encouraging, but she, and others, still considered it a mere whim, — a foolish attempt to be eccentric. It was easy to believe that pride made him stick to it, however much he might regret beginning. And he, on his part, misunderstood her quite as much as she misunderstood him, for he had convinced himself that it was the lowly nature of the work he was doing that had led her to so change her attitude toward him.

Dodd watched them and smiled in his whimsical

way. Indeed, it amused him so much that he could not refrain from telling her one day that she would give a million dollars to know what he knew.

"I couldn't pay any such sum for the information," she returned, laughing, "but, if it's of such great value to me, why don't you tell me, anyway? I'll promise to be grateful."

"Well," said Dodd, confidentially, "I'll tell you —"

"Yes."

"I'll tell you why I don't tell you."

"I'm beginning to think, with Mrs. Dodd, that you're incorrigible," laughed Miss Marsden. "No one ever knows what you're going to say or do. But, anyway, tell me why you won't tell me."

"Because," said Dodd, in a stage whisper, "you wouldn't believe me, if I did."

Then, pleased with his little joke, he tried it on Leonard.

"You wouldn't sleep to-night, if you knew what I know," he said.

"Would it worry me as much as that?" asked Leonard.

"It wouldn't worry you at all," replied Dodd.

"What is it?"

"Why, confidentially," answered Dodd, "it's —"

"Yes?"

"It's something that you've got to find out for yourself; but you'll find it out."

And no more would Dodd say, although his quiet laughter led Leonard to think it was all a joke. Then, quickly changing the subject, he announced that he had a little job for Leonard that evening.

"What is it?" asked Leonard.

"Why, I've had a little disagreement with a peninsula curiosity about some timber, and I'm going to drive over to see him. I wish you would go along, hear both sides of the case, and tell me if I am in the least unfair. He says I am, and I don't want to do any one the slightest injustice, but neither do I want any one to ride over me. If I seem to be demanding a penny more than my rights, just you kick my shins, and I'll back up. A fellow doesn't always see straight in his own case."

"Well, you're certainly careful to be fair," said Leonard.

"I have to be in this case," explained Dodd. "The fellow is pretty much at my mercy, and has got to accept my terms whenever I choose to insist. That's why I'm so anxious not to be unreasonable. If we were on even terms, I could bluster and bluff with the best of them."

"I doubt it," laughed Leonard. "You're too

ready to consider the rights of the other fellow, to the exclusion of your own. But what's this particular trouble about?"

"You'll find out when we get there. There's no use going over the ground twice. It's rough enough ground to make one trip over it all that you want, especially in the company of two such specimens as Dake Wakeley and yours truly. But you'll find he's worth going miles to see, and it's just the evening for a drive."

Now, it is possible that it was purely an accident, or it may be that there was something of design in it. There can be no doubt at all that Dodd had a mischievous streak in him, and was not above planning for a little harmless fun. There was nothing of malice in his humour, but there was so much of humour in him that one never could be sure just when he was quietly and privately enjoying a little joke of his own. In this instance, Miss Marsden and Mrs. Congrove had strolled down the road a short time before, and Dodd now announced that, as the buggy needed cleaning, he would take the surrey. As before stated, it may have been a coincidence, but the fact remains that he and Leonard overtook Miss Marsden and Mrs. Congrove and that they had ample room in their vehicle. An observing man might have noted, also, that something

seemed to strangely amuse Dodd previous to the discovery of the two ladies in the road, and that he was not in the least surprised to see them.

"Better ride," he suggested, drawing up, while Leonard bowed formally to Miss Marsden, and congratulated Mrs. Congrove on her increasing strength.

"Oh, we're out for the exercise," returned Miss Marsden.

"It's nearly all up-hill going back," urged Dodd.

Evidently there was a mischievous streak in Mrs. Congrove also, for, when Dodd solemnly winked at her, she laughed most inopportunately, and decided that the walk back might be rather hard for her.

"We've taken this stroll before," said Miss Marsden, in surprise.

"But I'm rather tired to-night, Jessie," insisted Mrs. Congrove.

"And you really ought to see the curiosity," added Dodd.

"What is it?" asked Mrs. Congrove.

"It's a he," replied Dodd. "He lives all alone in a deserted cabin in a clearing on the north end of the farm, acts as his own cook and housekeeper, hoards every penny he gets, and begs an occasional loaf of bread from his neighbours. I call him a curiosity because he would really be a good-looking man if he had false teeth, a shave, a hair-cut, a

bath, and a glass eye. That's about all he needs, except a better disposition."

"Oh, we must see him!" cried Mrs. Congrove.

"And I'll tell you a new way to make money as we drive along," said Dodd.

"I shall have to surrender to the allurements you hold out, Mr. Dodd," said Miss Marsden. "No one can withstand you."

Leonard sprang from his seat to help the ladies in, and then Mrs. Congrove did a surprising thing. She insisted upon riding on the front seat with Dodd.

"I won't surrender that privilege to any one," she declared. "Mr. Dodd furnishes just the kind of entertainment that makes me determined to have a front seat."

Mrs. Congrove, while a dependent woman in all the serious affairs of life, was of quick perception, and there seemed to be an understanding, suddenly reached, between her and Dodd. Leonard and Miss Marsden were their unconscious victims, — "because they are so foolish," as Mrs. Congrove would have expressed it.

Of course, neither Miss Marsden nor Leonard could well object, so he assisted her to the seat and then followed her. Dodd looked on with solemn face, but Mrs. Congrove smiled mischievously. It

was, indeed, an amusing spectacle, for Miss Marsden accepted Leonard's assistance with a resigned air, and Leonard seemed fearful of meeting a rebuff. Once on the seat together, both tried unsuccessfully to appear at ease, although it must be admitted that Miss Marsden did far better than Leonard. It was one thing to be merely formally courteous in the casual meetings of life on the farm, and quite another to carry out the same idea on the narrow seat of a surrey, bumping over a rough road. They tried to speak of commonplace things in a commonplace way, but it all sounded flat and ridiculous.

"Do you feel cold?" Dodd whispered to Mrs. Congrove.

She looked up in surprise, only to catch that solemn wink — and she understood and laughed.

"I suppose it's mean," she said, "with my own sister."

"But if people will be foolish, what are we to do?" asked Dodd, whimsically.

"No whispering!" cautioned Leonard, trying to speak lightly.

"I was telling Mrs. Congrove about my Shetland pony farm," returned Dodd, unblushingly.

"Your Shetland pony farm!" cried Miss Marsden, glad of this opportunity to make the conversation general. "Where is it? Tell us about it!"

"It's here," explained Dodd, tapping his forehead. "People say that I have wheels, but they are mistaken. What they consider wheels are merely Shetland ponies galloping about. This farm is one of my many ways of making money."

"In theory," said Leonard, "you ought to be a billionaire."

"In theory, yes," returned Dodd, rather sadly. "My schemes have been devised since I have been unable to put them into execution; before that I was too busy making money in the ordinary ways. And people with money stick to the ordinary ways, just as I did, so it is useless to mention anything new to them, — except possibly when you have the prestige of great success behind you."

"But this theoretical farm," persisted Leonard.

"Why," said Dodd, "it's just this way: Shetland ponies are as hardy and as easy to raise as sheep. Now, in my theoretical farm, up here," tapping his forehead again, "I have been careful to choose a convenient locality, from which I can get my ponies to market easily. I have also arranged to play a little confidence game on some of our well-to-do people. I know where their children are at school, and some day, just about the noon hour, I wander along with a drove of Shetland ponies. The boys are after me in a minute. I talk to them and let

them try some of the ponies. They are for sale at a reasonable price, and pretty soon one boy announces that he's sure his father will buy one for him. Another is just as sure; another isn't quite so sure, but he's going to make the old man's life miserable if he doesn't. Before I quit, I have forty or fifty sales-agents enlisted, each one bound to sell a pony to his own father, and you bet they'll do it, if the old man has the money and a place to keep the pony. You get the pony fever started in a town, and you can take the money away in baskets. All that's necessary is to show up at the right kind of schools, — schools in the right localities, I mean. Towns would be better than cities, for there is too much flat-life in the cities, and consequently too few people able to keep a pony, even when well able to buy one. But, with a little judgment, a fellow could do pretty well in the cities." Dodd paused and looked dreamily over the fields. "I have a dozen men out with ponies from my fanciful farm now," he announced at last. "They have mastered the business and they know where to go. They show up always where children are congregated; they are centres of pleasurable excitement and enthusiasm. Perhaps you can picture the scene when a man comes along, at close of school, with well-broken and hardy little ponies."

"I can," said Leonard, emphatically. "I've been a boy myself."

"Perhaps," continued Dodd, "you can picture various fond fathers either reaching for their pocket-books or taking to the woods when the cry goes up, 'Dodd's ponies are coming!'"

"I do not see how a fond father could avoid one thing or the other," asserted Leonard.

"Nor I," added Mrs. Congrove. "I should think there'd be a fortune in your scheme."

"It's one thing to sell ponies through the regular horse markets, and another to sell them through the children," declared Leonard.

"All of which convinces me," said Dodd, drily, "that possibly an all-wise Providence was showing thoughtful consideration for the fond fathers when it deprived me of my money before I had thought out this scheme. Otherwise, I would be more dangerous than a pirate."



CHAPTER XVIII.

THE CASE OF DODD VS. WAKELEY

DAKE WAKELEY's log cabin was in a clearing at the north end of the Dodd farm, and it was in such a tumble-down condition that it had to be propped up with poles on one side. No one knew just when Dake had taken possession of it; he was simply discovered there one day, and Dodd had let him stay. The Dodd farm was unusually extensive, but only the south part of it was cleared and planted, the north end being still nearly all forest, with winding roads cut through. As Dodd had no possible use for the old cabin, and was not utilizing the land

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in the vicinity, he saw no reason to disturb Dake, further than to exact a nominal rent for the purpose of keeping his title from being threatened by any attempt to establish squatter rights. This nominal rental was paid in work, and, to such extent, Dake received recognition and was allowed to do a little farming on his own account. As he lived on almost nothing, begged a part of his provisions, made some money by his farming, and spent nothing, he was popularly supposed to have a fairly good sum hoarded up. But he looked like a poverty-stricken wretch.

When they came in sight of the cabin, Mrs. Congrove and Miss Marsden could not repress an exclamation of astonishment.

"Is it possible that any one lives in that place?" cried Mrs. Congrove.

"I would hardly say 'lives,'" replied Dodd, "but Dake Wakeley exists there."

"It looks deserted," said Miss Marsden. "Some of the windows are broken and there are cracks between the logs. One corner seems almost ready to collapse."

"True," returned Dodd. "It matches the man. If he's too miserly to repair himself, you can't expect him to repair his home. He plugs up the

holes in winter and lets things rip in summer — inside and out. You ought to see the inside.”

“Is it like the outside?” asked Leonard.

“No,” replied Dodd. “He can’t prevent the sun and the rain from getting at the outside, and sort of cleaning and cheering things up a bit, but he can shut them out of the inside and keep things slovenly enough to seem sort of homelike to him. I don’t think you’d better go in. I’ll bring him out.”

Dodd left the surrey a short distance from the cabin, and went after his man. The door almost fell in when he pushed it, being caught by some one on the inside, who pushed it back into place, and then laboriously opened it by lifting one side and swinging it around. The top hinge was missing, and the lower one was only a piece of leather.

The sun was just disappearing behind the trees to the west, but its last rays made the cabin and its occupant stand out very distinctly when the man emerged. And they were eminently suited to each other. Dake Wakeley was even more dilapidated than his home. He had only one eye, a scraggly gray beard, matted hair, and only about a third the usual number of teeth, as was very evident when he tried to talk. He was dirty, unkempt, ragged, and the way he held his hand to his ear showed that he was also slightly deaf, although later it



DAKE WAKELEY.

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was discovered that he had little difficulty in hearing what he wanted to hear.

A conference followed that seemed to be mutually unsatisfactory. Dodd apparently was trying to insist upon something, to which Dake strenuously objected, for Dodd would point to the surrey and Dake would shake his head. Finally Dodd came slowly back to the surrey, while Dake started away across the fields.

"He wants to tell his story to a judge," Dodd announced. "I wanted him to tell it to you, just to satisfy my own conscience that I am just and right in the matter."

"Do you have to let him put you to all this trouble?" asked Leonard, to whom the remark had been addressed.

"Why, no," replied Dodd, simply. "He has occupied and used my property for years without a cent of pay, although lately I have insisted that he shall do a trifling amount of work as a sort of recognition of my ownership. I can put him off at any time; but," in his conciliatory way, "if it will satisfy him any better to tell his story to Judge Pratt, why not let him do it? I always like to convince people that I'm fair. If you don't mind," he added, resuming his seat in the surrey, "we'll drive over to Pratt's farm. He's the nearest justice, and

his duties take mighty little time from his farm work. Dake is taking a short cut that will get him there as soon as we are."

As they drove along, all were thinking of the curious and repulsive old fellow, who chose to live alone in this wretched way, and make himself even more unprepossessing than nature had made him.

"How lonely it must be!" exclaimed Mrs. Congrove, with a shudder.

"Not necessarily," returned Dodd, musingly. "A man may be company for himself in the woods, but never in the city. I have been joyous in the solitude of the woods; I have laughed and sung as I drove through a sparsely settled country, where I met few and knew none; but I was miserable in my loneliness one day in New York City. I sat at a hotel window and watched the hurrying throng, and I realized that never before in my life had I known what real loneliness was. In all that crowd not a soul did I know and not a soul knew me. I was no more to them than any brick in any of the buildings; I was just a jackstraw in the pile. No other day of my life was so long as that one, and never before or since have I been so blue and depressed. And I was not a backwoodsman, unaccustomed to city ways, either. I tell you, there

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is no loneliness in the country that equals the loneliness of a stranger in a great city."

Dodd's voice was dreamily gentle as he said this, and somehow it turned the thoughts of all into channels that made them silent. It was dusk now, — the hour of sentiment and sympathy, — and there was not one of them who did not conjure up some picture of pathetic loneliness. Leonard and Miss Marsden were rather glad to have their thoughts and the attention of the other two diverted.

Thus they arrived at the home of Theodore Pratt, J. P., and found that worthy, milk-pail in hand, listening to an explanation of the situation by Dake Wakeley, who had arrived a moment before, and had caught the distinguished judicial officer between the barn and the house.

"Hiram!" yelled the justice, when he saw Dodd drive up. "You Hiram! Come get this milk an' tell your ma to put a lamp in the court-room. I got law business on hand."

Then, without waiting for Hiram, he put down the milk-pail and advanced to the surrey.

"Evenin', Dodd," was his greeting.

"Good evening, judge," returned Dodd, as solemnly as if the incongruity of the whole thing were not apparent to him.

"Got a purty big case on, I hear," persisted the

justice. "Reckon I better send over fer Cy Tappan"

"Oh, I'm willing to leave it to you," said Dodd.

"No," said the justice, gravely shaking his head. "When it ain't more'n the case of a stray sow, I'm willin' to try it alone, but this here's a case for advice."

"Dodd, he don't care," put in Wakeley. "It ain't nothin' to him, fer he's rich."

"Oh, yes, I'm rich," retorted Dodd, sarcastically. "I made \$2,000 to-day by raising the price of my farm."

"Got a buyer?" asked the justice, quickly.

"No," replied Dodd. "I haven't even got an offer, but I put up the price \$2,000, so I'm \$2,000 richer. Anybody can see that. If I don't seem rich enough to-morrow, I'll put it up again. It's easy to make money when the assessor isn't due."

"I wisht I could git rich like that," grumbled Wakeley, and the laughing party in the sally were astonished to see that both the justice and Wakeley were blind to the point of the joke.

"You study Wall Street until you find out what fictional wealth is," advised Dodd, "and then you can get rich any time. I don't see why you can't make as much as you want by raising the price of your hat."

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The justice scratched his head in perplexity, and Dake Wakeley took off his battered old hat and looked at it. Then the justice decided that the problem was too much for him, and invited them all into the house to have a glass of cider while waiting for Hiram to bring Cy Tappan, the associate justice pro tem.

The "court-room," to which they repaired, proved to be a room that also did duty as parlour and library. It had the old, stiff, uncomfortable haircloth furniture, a small organ that probably hadn't been opened for years, the usual books and trinkets on the what-not, some family pictures and chromos, a big Bible, and, in one corner, a table for the justice. It was all so stiff and formal that it gave one the blues, but here they sat and talked until Tappan arrived, although Dake was considerate enough to wait outside.

When Tappan appeared, he and Pratt took their places behind the table in the corner, with the lamp in front of them and a solitary law-book at Pratt's elbow. Then Dodd and Wakeley were called upon to take seats directly in front of the table, while the others sat a little behind them.

"This here court will come to order!" announced Justice Pratt. Then, apologetically, "I ain't always so pertickler on forms, but this here's a big case,

an' we can't be too careful to see that the rich an' the lowly has ekal justice. Now, what's it all about?"

"Why, your honours," Dodd began, gravely, but Wakeley interrupted with, "He's tryin' to beat me, — him a rich man an' me a poor one."

"Silence in the court!" ordered Justice Pratt. "You ain't the judge, to say what anybody's tryin' to do. That's what me an' Cy is here fer. Now, what's it all about?"

Dodd waited for Wakeley to begin his story this time, but Wakeley had been cowed by the reprimand.

"The plaintiff," began Pratt, and then stopped. "Dern me, if I know which is the plaintiff," he said, bewildered. "How about that, Cy?"

Tappan, however, was as bewildered as his associate, and could only scratch his head and look anxiously at the solitary law-book.

"The court," announced Pratt, "will talk over the law."

Then the two farmers leaned toward each other, in earnest consultation, until their gray whiskers and gray hair intermingled. Dodd took this opportunity to turn until Leonard and the two ladies could see his twinkling eyes. They were all having trouble keeping their faces straight, for both of the

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farmers were entirely solemn and serious about the matter, and Pratt's sudden switches from the extreme of dignity to the familiar "Cy" that he used when addressing his associate were really convulsing, — the more so because he had no idea that he was anything but gravely impressive.

"The court," said Pratt, when the conference was ended, "decides that it don't care which is plaintiff, there not seemin' to be any rule coverin' the point in this case, an' it decides that it's Dodd's turn to tell what he claims. Go ahead, Dodd."

"Has Dodd been swore?" interrupted the associate justice.

"By gum!" cried Pratt, excitedly. "Hand up that Bible. Dodd, do you swear to take this woman —"

His associate nudged him, and Pratt stopped and grew very red.

"I was usin' that form last night," he said, explanatorily. "Kiss the Bible, Dodd, an' give me your word you'll stick to facts."

Both parties to the controversy having thus agreed to stick to facts, Pratt again instructed Dodd to tell his story.

"This man, Dake Wakeley, has been on my land for a good many years," said Dodd, "and during the last few years I have insisted that he

shall pay a small rental in produce, just to keep the question of ownership clear."

"I paid it, ain't I?" interrupted Wakeley.

"Not the last time," replied Dodd.

"I can't pay what I ain't got, an' —"

"Silence!" thundered Justice Pratt. "Go on, Dodd."

"I have occasionally paid him a little something for work, too," said Dodd, "and last winter I made a deal with him to clear three and a half acres at twenty dollars an acre. Isn't that correct, Wakeley?"

"Yes, but I ain't got the money."

"Seventy dollars," announced Tappan, who had made a hasty computation on his fingers.

"A big case," commented Pratt. "That's why I was fer callin' you in. Go on, Dodd."

"After clearing this three and a half acres of timber," Dodd continued, "he was to plant it to potatoes, share and share alike, and then pay himself for the work out of my share. I was to have nothing until my share had paid him seventy dollars. In other words, he was to get a total of \$140 out of that cleared space before he began to pay me anything, and after that it was to be share and share alike of whatever was raised on it, as long as I owned the land and he planted it."

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"That's the reg'lar way of farmin' on shares," said Pratt.

"And the clearing that his house and garden are on he's been using without any pay ever since he first located there," added Dodd. "I thought I was pretty liberal."

"Looks that way," said Pratt, and Tappan nodded a grave affirmation.

"But I ain't never got the money out of the clearin', an' I want it," asserted Wakeley, doggedly.

"You didn't plant it," said Dodd, "but you took my timber and sold it."

"I got to get paid some way," said Wakeley.

"Hold on!" ordered Pratt. "What's the rest of the story?"

"The timber, of course, belonged to me," explained Dodd. "That's why I was willing to pay him to clear the land. But he sold the timber, pocketed the money, and didn't plant the clearing at all. Then he made a further demand on me for the seventy dollars cash."

"I was to have it fer clearin' the land," Wakeley declared.

"You were to get it out of the potatoes," asserted Dodd.

"But there ain't any potatoes," argued Wakeley.

"That's your fault," said Dodd.

"But there ain't any potatoes," repeated Wakeley, sullenly. "I got to have my money."

"You sold the timber," said Dodd.

"Well, I got to get my money somehow," argued Wakeley.

"And now you want seventy dollars cash."

"I was to git it fer clearin' the land."

"Silence!" ordered Pratt. "It's ag'in the dignity of this here court to have any back-talkin'. Now, what's the claim?"

"I want my seventy dollars!" exclaimed Wakeley.

"Your honours," said Dodd, "I am entitled to the money for the sale of the timber, and I have a right to demand that Wakeley shall get his pay as originally arranged. I am in no way to blame for his failure to plant the clearing to potatoes this year, and his neglect to carry out the agreement means some loss to me,—the loss of my share of this year's yield. It certainly is no more than fair to demand that he get his pay out of that clearing, beginning next year, but I'm willing to do even better than that. Let him take his pay out of the money he got for the timber—it was valuable timber—and return the balance to me. Then he may plant the clearing on shares next year."

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"I got to git my money," said Wakeley, as if he could think of nothing else.

"Let's sum up these here claims," interposed Pratt. "Wakeley claims seventy dollars fer clearin' the land, an' Dodd claims the money fer the timber."

"There's the question of planting the clearing, and getting the money that way," suggested Dodd.

"It ain't planted," declared Pratt, oracularly, "so it don't figger in the case. Me an' Cy has the facts now, so we'll step outside an' consider. No use sayin' more."

The two judges rose and walked out on to the porch, where they could be seen arguing the question for five or ten minutes. Then they marched back, and Pratt, standing, announced the decision of the court.

"Considerin' this matter as between man an' man," he said, impressively, "we find that Dan'l Dodd an' Dake Wakeley, each on 'em, owes the court fifty cents an' fees, an' that Dan'l Dodd owes Dake Wakeley five dollars, an' the question of plantin' the clearin' to potatoes can come up next season, if they don't fix it up between 'em afore that. An', as man to man, we think this fair."

It was Dodd's turn to scratch his head and look bewildered, and Leonard was quite as bewildered.

Aside from any question of the merits of the case, where had that five dollars come in? Neither party, at any point, had even thought of a five-dollar claim. But Dodd was abstractedly reaching for his pocket-book.

"It's outrageous!" whispered Leonard, leaning forward. "Don't pay it."

"Oh, they mean all right," replied Dodd.

"But you can get back at old One-Eye, anyway," urged Leonard, for the decision made him indignant.

"I can," admitted Dodd. "But I told him I'd leave it to the justice, and I never was a small man, — that is, not that I know of. I'll just pay him the five and call it settled. I never was much of a fellow for revenge."

Still Leonard was dissatisfied, and he watched for an opportunity to speak to Pratt when they all walked out to the surrey.

"Pardon me, judge," he said, "but that decision certainly puzzles me."

"Oh, Dodd's a good fellow," replied the justice, "and we didn't want to be hard on him."

"But it seems to me you were," urged Leonard. "The judgment should have been against the other man, according to my view of the evidence."

The justice shook his head.

"It ain't any use passin' judgments that can't be enforced," he said. "It hurts the dignity of a court. An' you can see he ain't got any money, so ain't it foolish to order a man to do what he can't do? But you got to make some findin'."

"The evidence showed he got the money for that timber, didn't it?" asked Leonard.

The justice stopped short.

"By gum! we clean fergot that!" he exclaimed.

"It's a dern shame, that's what it is!"

Although he refused to store the thing up against his late opponent and take the revenge that was within his reach, even going so far the other way as to say a pleasant word when he paid the money, the kindly Dodd was really disgruntled by the decision, and they were nearly home before he brightened up and remarked that it was a costly joke.

"What was?" asked Leonard.

"That remark about making \$2,000 by raising the price of my farm. I figure it out that I paid five dollars for that joke. The judge didn't see the point, and he assessed the damages against the man he thought could best afford to pay. They don't like rich men up here, anyway, and — Well, any time you think I'm getting too gay, just say 'Five dollars,' and see how quick I'll calm down. I always did hate a man who couldn't be serious."

But the moonlight showed those twinkling eyes again, for Dodd liked nothing better than to state a truth facetiously or a joke solemnly, and there was truth in what he said about the justice.

CHAPTER XIX.

DODD AND THE INDIANS

LEONARD at last had discovered the joy of working, — not of working for fame or profit, but just of working. The work he had been doing was not congenial, but he discovered that it was infinitely better than idleness.

“Without the work,” he told himself, “life here would have been intolerable, and I would have wearied of it long ago. It was all right for a brief change from the previous excitement, but I couldn’t have stood it long. With the work, time has passed rather pleasantly.”

Of course, Leonard had, and could appreciate, the companionship of Dodd, and there was always a welcome for him at the main house, so his situation was not exactly that of the ordinary farm-hand. Then, too, Jessie Marsden had given him plenty of food for thought, so that his mind was occupied. There could be no doubt that she had had a good deal to do with the eagerness with which he adopted

farm work as a temporary solution of the problem that confronted him, but later he had found a measure of personal satisfaction in it. The gratification of doing came into his life for the first time. Only the physically tired man can really appreciate sleep and rest; the man who does not tire himself in honest labour loses one of the greatest pleasures of life. Without exactly reasoning it out, Leonard had come to understand this, and was looking forward to the time when he should have an opportunity to do something really worthy of himself. And this opportunity was already in sight. Alvord, the lawyer, had written to say that one of the men to whom Leonard had applied by letter would have an opening for him about the middle of September. This man had been a friend of Leonard's father, and, after a conference with Alvord, had decided to give the young man a chance to show what he could do. The salary would be small for a man accustomed to live as Leonard had lived, but there was excellent promise for the future. That was all Leonard asked. As a matter of fact, his inclinations had so changed that he would have accepted that place even if his lost money were suddenly restored to him. There was so much more in life when one was doing something, when one felt that one's own efforts were bringing even a small measure of success. He found

that he had the same ambition to win at work that he formerly had to win at play. And the same letter that brought him the news of his opportunity also informed him that there was likely to be no question of wealth to distract his thoughts. He would get a little out of the wrecked bank, but only enough to make things a trifle easier for a short time, — not enough to invest with a view to having a permanent income. But this news did not trouble Leonard as much as the news of his business opportunity pleased him; his interest centred in what he could do rather than in what he could get. If only Miss Marsden had been a little more gracious, the summer — But, as usual, he steered away from this subject when he reached this point.

As the time for his departure approached, he talked the matter over frequently with Dodd, and the latter seemed to share his enthusiasm and pleasure.

“Do you know,” he said, as they sat on the porch one evening, “I never supposed it was a possible thing for me to work like this!”

“Habit,” commented Dodd. “Habit puts restrictions on all of us, and we have to put aside the restrictions before we know what we can do. Why, there was a school-teacher came to me once — Did

you know that I served as a school trustee for a time?"

"I didn't," replied Leonard, "but I should think you would make a good one."

"I don't know about that," said Dodd, "but I had my own ideas. Well, this school-teacher came to me and said the work was too hard.

"Others seem to stand it," I suggested. 'Are you ill or an invalid?'

"No; I'm in perfect health," she replied, warmly; 'but I can't stand the hours and the work.'

"Habit," I said, 'has put restrictions on you that you should remove. Then you will discover how much you can do.'

"I had studied her pretty closely while she was there, and I thought she would see the point of this, but she merely left in indignation. Then her mother came.

"You are killing my daughter with work," she said. 'Her health is being undermined.'

"I have noticed it," I returned.

"She must be transferred or given some lighter work," she persisted. 'Why, she fainted twice last week.'

"Madam," I said, 'do you really wish to do something for your daughter's welfare in this matter?'

“‘Of course,’ she replied; ‘or, rather, I want you to do it.’

“‘It wouldn’t be proper for me to do it,’ I told her.

“‘Why not?’ she asked.

“‘Because,’ I said, with my most courtly bow, ‘all she needs is to have her corset-strings cut.’

“Well,” concluded Dodd, “I don’t know whether the restrictions of habit were removed in this case or not, but I heard no more complaints from that woman or her daughter. Any one of sense could have seen the reason for her fainting spells.”

Mrs. Congrove, Miss Marsden, and some of the other boarders had come out on the porch during the telling of this little anecdote, and their laughter encouraged the old man to delve a little deeper into his school experiences.

“The great trouble with many teachers is that they have learned their little lesson just as they expect the scholars to learn theirs,” he remarked, musingly, “and they don’t know anything else. It’s all a matter of rules: they learn by rule and they teach by rule; they seldom do any reasoning. If you stop one of them in the middle of a demonstration, she’s got to begin at the beginning again, like a parrot speaking a piece; if a child does an example a new way, the teacher is lost and marks

it wrong on general principles. Why, I had one come up for examination, who had a formula as long as your arm for the simplest problems. When she got started, I could just catch something like this: 'Constituent units . . . factors . . . ratio of . . . divide . . . find the relation . . . and then you add and multiply.' That seemed to be the limit of her knowledge, and she would rattle it off at the rate of a mile a minute. If you stopped her, she would have to begin all over again. I'm not sure that it was always identically the same rule, but she always reached the same conclusion—to add and multiply. Why, she rattled along down to that same point when I suddenly switched my questioning from arithmetic to geography, and she never could understand why she didn't get a place in our schools. Said I was prejudiced, I believe."

"What is she doing now?" asked one of the ladies.

"Still trying to add and multiply, I guess," replied Dodd, dreamily. "She's married."

For a moment there was a dead silence. Then Leonard deliberately tipped his chair over and rolled off the porch. A jolly little woman put a handkerchief to her face, but could not stifle the sounds of suppressed laughter. A very prim young woman

began, "I don't see —" and stopped. Then, somehow, the little gathering broke up.

"What's the matter?" asked Dodd, as Leonard, still laughing, got on his feet.

But Leonard only shooed Dodd away weakly with one hand and continued to laugh, — not so much at Dodd's slip of the tongue as at the bewildered, blank looks of those who heard it. They did not know whether to laugh or to endeavour to look sublimely unconscious, and this it was that made the situation so ludicrous.

"I didn't mean it," protested Dodd.

"I shall never be able to decide positively whether you did or not," replied Leonard, "but — Hullo! here come your Indians!"

Leonard always referred to the Indians as Dodd's, because they seemed to trust Dodd and depend on him in many ways. Their camp was across the bay to the west, and they came over to the peninsula to sell baskets to the summer boarders scattered all the way from Neahtawanta to the lighthouse. During these brief visits they camped on Dodd's land, came to Dodd for supplies, and gave Dodd first chance to buy the fish that they occasionally caught. Others might deal with them and sell and buy, but Dodd was their friend. Now, headed by a massive half-breed known as Big John, they came

across the lawn in single file and offered some fish for sale. Mrs. Dodd came out to attend to the details of this deal, and bought and paid for the fish she wanted. Then Big John held up a quarter, and, with guttural terseness, said, "Corn!" Dodd took the quarter, and waved his hand in the direction of a patch of sweet corn, whereupon the Indians filed away in that direction.

"I suppose they'll take all they can carry," remarked Leonard.

"They'll take no more than they've paid for," replied Dodd. "Treat an Indian fair and he'll treat you fair; cheat him and he'll get even with you some way at some time. I'll trust them farther than I will a good many white men that I know."

"They consider Mr. Dodd their friend," explained Mrs. Dodd, "and they trust him."

"An Indian's faith," added Dodd, "is the faith of the dog, — unwavering and unreasoning. I have been clever to them in some trifling ways —"

"Trifling ways," repeated Mrs. Dodd. "In that cloudburst last spring, when their temporary camp was washed out, you took them to Terrace Cottage, and then you came to the house through that frightful storm, and went back again with some milk for the children and provisions for the bucks and

squaws, because all they had was spoiled or washed away."

"But a fellow doesn't like to think of people being cold and wet and hungry," pleaded Dodd. "That was an awful night to spend without shelter. They had papooses with them, too. And they cleaned up the cottage before leaving as no white man ever would think of doing. I guess they would do as much for me if I happened to be on the other side of the bay."

"That's right enough," laughed Mrs. Dodd. "I don't think there is anything they wouldn't do for you."

"Besides," persisted Dodd, "somebody ought to stand up for them, for nearly everybody is against them. When they go to town on circus day, they get drunk and make trouble,—a trick the white man has taught them,—and so the white man charges all evil up to them. Chickens and an occasional pig have been stolen from some of the farms lately. Two men have been to me to accuse the Indians, and to get me to join them in a scheme to have their main camp on the west shore searched."

"What did you say?" asked Leonard.

"I told them," replied Dodd, "that it is my experience that the Indians never steal, knowingly. They simply take the pay that you neglect or refuse

to give them. If the Indians took anything from me without my knowledge and consent, I would immediately review the past, to see where I had defrauded them. When an Indian steals, he thinks he is taking only what is due him from the community or the individual, — with interest generally, just like the white man. I have learned that, as long as I am fair with him, he will be fair with me, and possibly he is the more grateful because there are so few who do not suspect him and show it. But there have been a lot of thefts in this vicinity lately. My only contention is that you can't tell a thief by the colour of his skin."

"And the Indians," suggested Mrs. Dodd, "are so dependent on the favour of the people and the government that they can't afford to do any such extensive stealing."

"Quite true," admitted Dodd, "but I rather like to credit them with better motives."

CHAPTER XX.

DODD IS ANNOYED

THE near approach of the time for Leonard's departure disturbed Dodd. It was not that he was to lose Leonard, although he had conceived a great liking for the young man, but he believed that Leonard was going to lose a great deal himself. The relations existing between Leonard and Miss Marsden distressed Dodd, for he felt sure that he knew what lay beneath the surface, and yet he saw no way of making them understand each other without breaking faith with Leonard and explaining the exact situation. Even then, he was pretty sure to be misunderstood and to make things worse, for Dodd fully appreciated what a ticklish thing it is to interfere in such matters. Nevertheless, he did venture to suggest to Leonard that Miss Marsden laboured under a misapprehension that was unjust to him.

"Well, let her," returned Leonard, rather shortly.

"If she chooses to misinterpret what I do, it is her privilege."

A short time before Dodd would have greeted this with one of his whimsical smiles, and would have thought it rather diverting, but now it disturbed him. He could see and enjoy the humour of a trifling and somewhat absurd misunderstanding, but the happiness of others was a part of his creed. For the happiness of others he decided that he was justified in breaking faith with Leonard and explaining the young man's situation. Dodd was no masculine match-maker, but he disliked to see things go seriously wrong. However, it was one thing to decide on a course, and quite another to act on the decision. Any mention of Leonard was greeted by Miss Marsden with a cold formality that was chilling. It was a good deal as if he spoke of the Czar of Russia or the Ahkoond of Swat or some other person so far removed that it was an effort to show even a slight interest in their doings. So, finally, Dodd was forced to speak without getting a favourable opportunity, and he showed a woeful lack of his customary diplomacy. In fact, this unaccustomed rôle had made him so desperate that he leaned forward one day, and said, with blunt confidence: "He isn't as bad as you think. Why, he hasn't any money at all."

Miss Marsden was so astonished that she did not grasp the full meaning of this at the moment, although she knew perfectly well to whom Dodd referred.

"Other people's personal affairs do not interest me, Mr. Dodd," she replied, and Dodd got up, and walked disconsolately away.

"I always suspected that I was a fool," he soliloquized, "but I wouldn't have believed I was so big a fool, without proof. And I've got the proof."

He was so completely disgusted with himself that it was with a positive feeling of relief that he saw Erastus Dutton driving up the back road toward the barn, although he instantly jumped to the conclusion that Dutton was in more trouble, and more trouble for Dutton was likely to involve him. He was on Dutton's short-time note, and the note was nearly due. Furthermore, Dutton was not a man to put himself to any great inconvenience to bring good news.

"But he'll give me a problem that's in my line," thought Dodd, "and won't lure me on to show how foolish I can be."

Dutton began to talk the moment he drew up his horse at the carriage-shed.

"You ain't goin' to lose a cent, Dodd," he said, with trembling voice, as he climbed out of his buggy.

"I'll pay ye every penny, Dodd, every penny, an' I was honest, too. I thought the money was comin', an' it ought to come. It's got to come, Dodd. They promised me, an' they got to pay."

The purport of these remarks was plain: Dutton would be unable to meet his note, and Dodd would have to pay.

"Lord! what will Emma say?" was his first thought. His sympathy and good nature had led him to do a generous but unbusinesslike thing, to which he knew his sensible wife would have objected, and he felt a good deal like a boy who had been caught playing hookey. But he showed nought of this to Dutton.

"Of course I'm not going to lose a cent," he said, "and neither are you. I don't know what it's all about, but we're both going to get all that belongs to us."

"In another season I'll be all right, an' I'll pay ye, Dodd," Dutton persisted, excitedly grabbing Dodd's hand. "You was good to me, an' I wouldn't have ye lose a cent fer a million dollars. I'll pay it all back, if it takes ten year."

"Who's talking of losing a cent?" demanded Dodd, in an effort to calm the other. "I'm not. I don't expect to lose anything. Now, what's all

the fuss about? Tie up your horse, and then tell me what's wrong."

Dutton was almost hysterical, and kept repeating, "You ain't goin' to lose a cent, Dodd!" but Dodd finally got him settled on a log beside the carriage-shed, and then induced him to explain himself. His story was that he had shipped his apples to market, as he had planned when he made the loan, but there had been some delay about paying for them. It had been the understanding that the commission man would take them at the market price for that grade, but Dutton did not have this definitely in writing, and, besides, the question of their condition when received had to be left to the purchaser. Most of the fruit-growers had the feeling that they frequently got very much the worst of the deal in this way, and shipments had been known to be refused and allowed to spoil. In this particular case, Dutton had finally become so nervous over the delay, having understood that he was to have an immediate remittance, that he had drawn on the commission man, and the draft had been allowed to go to protest.

"He kep' the apples," wailed Dutton, "an' he didn't tell me anything was wrong with 'em or that he wouldn't take 'em, so's I could have a chance to try some one else; he didn't do a thing but refuse

to pay my draft, an' I don't know yet what's the matter with 'em."

- “ Oh, he'll have to pay something for them,” said Dodd, consolingly. “ He can't keep the apples and refuse to pay anything.”

“ But what'll he pay? an' when?” asked Dutton. “ He knows I'm hard up an' have got to have money mighty soon. I ain't got time to make a fight; I got to take what he offers, an' it looks like he was puttin' me where he could say them apples steamed an' offer less 'n half what they're worth, an' make me like it. I'm lookin' to git word from him, 'Take this or fight!' an' 'this' won't be enough to pay the note, let alone leavin' a margin I got to have. He's gone in to rob me, deliberate.”

“ It doesn't look just right,” admitted Dodd, “ but you may be mistaken. Drafts come at mighty inconvenient times to even the best of concerns occasionally, but he certainly ought to explain it. Have you telegraphed him?”

“ That's why I come to see ye,” said Dutton, drawing a sheet of foolscap from his pocket. “ I been tryin' to telegraph him, but it costs most too much, an' I thought you, bein' a business man once, could fix it up. I got to let him know it's important.”

"Yes," admitted Dodd, "you've got to let him know it's important."

"An' I got to be nice to him."

"Why?" asked Dodd. "Has he been clever to you?"

"Well, no, but I may want to do business with him ag'in."

"Not if he's the kind of a man you think he is," said Dodd.

"I want to show him that I ain't tryin' to be mean, only I got to do it," persisted Dutton. "If I make him mad, he won't pay — not now, anyhow."

"If you apologize to him when he refuses a draft," retorted Dodd, "he'll think you're easy. There are times for conciliation and times for indignation. Let's see your telegram."

Dutton handed it to Dodd, and Dodd read it carefully. It was a letter rather than a telegram — a letter of explanation and apology. It recalled the understanding upon which the apples had been shipped, referred to a conversation and a previous letter, gave the date of shipment and of an unanswered letter of inquiry, explained the necessity for realizing on the shipment promptly to meet other obligations, and hoped that payment of the draft had been refused under a misapprehension.

"That covers the ground, it seems to me," said Dutton, anxiously.

"It covers the ground," admitted Dodd, "but with a useless waste of words."

"I thought you could condense it," said Dutton, hopefully. "But I want him to understand."

"Quite right," returned Dodd. "It is important that he should understand, and, as I am considerably interested in this matter myself, I would like to have you send my revision of this remarkable despatch."

"I'll do it," said Dutton.

Dodd tore a strip off the bottom of the sheet of foolscap, threw the rest away, and then wrote on the strip: "Why in hell don't you honour my draft?"

"Sign that and send it," said Dodd, "and I think he will understand."

Dutton gasped.

"I don't dare," he said.

"You promised," said Dodd.

"It'll make him mad," urged Dutton.

"It will make him think you're mad," returned Dodd, "and it's time to make him think so. There's no use being ugly, you know," he added, with his whimsical smile, "but a little convincing earnestness is not out of place. And you want him to understand."

Dutton was undecided, but when he looked at Dodd, the latter merely said, "I mean it. Send that message just as it stands."

"All right," returned Dutton, although he still shook his head doubtfully. "I guess I got to do what you say."

For some time after Dutton had left, Dodd remained seated on the log, thinking the matter over. It would be very inconvenient to have that note presented to him for payment, and it would be very awkward to have to explain to Mrs. Dodd, for he had promised her not to entangle himself financially for any one, especially while his own affairs were in such unsatisfactory condition. And now —

He got up with a sigh, and made his way to the nearest orchard. He had done all that he could do in the matter, and he might as well give his attention to less distressing subjects. All in all, things did not seem to be going very well with him that day.

Even when he went to the house a little later, there was something to vex him. As usual, he had his pockets full of apples. In the fruit season Dodd always appeared with fruit of one kind or another in his pockets. He gathered whatever was just ripening, and brought it to the house for inspection. The apples he brought in now he regarded

as prize specimens, and he carefully deposited them on a table in the sitting-room, whereupon Mrs. Dodd promptly swooped down upon him.

"Take those right up," she ordered, and he meekly obeyed. Then she took the embroidered table-cover off, and folded it up. "I don't know what's the matter with that girl," she remarked. "I've told her dozens of times that we can't have table-covers anywhere in the house during the fruit season, for Dan'l always has his pockets full, and he empties them wherever he happens to be."

Dodd deposited his apples on the bare table, looked after the retreating form of his wife, and remarked, "I like to have things neat, but some women will strain at a gnat and swallow a saw-mill." Then the twinkle reappeared in his eyes, and he laughed silently. "Things have gone a little wrong to-day, but I suppose we ought not to expect to have it as easy as they do at Beaver Island."

"Do they have such an easy time there?" asked Mrs. Congrove, who had been reading in the room when the little scene was enacted.

"Pretty easy," replied Dodd. "Beaver Island is the place where wrecks are most frequent, and the people there get their living from the wreckage, grain vessels in distress being especially welcome.

We were discussing crops one day when a Beaver Island man joined in.

“ ‘The Lord is good to us over on Beaver Island,’ he said, devoutly. ‘He not only sends us corn, but He sends it shelled.’

“It took some of us a little time to figure the thing out, but we got there at last. Things don’t come to us as easy here, but I guess they don’t come to them as easy there as they used to, either. We’re drifting away from the simple life.”

“Do you think so?”

“Oh, yes, indeed,” returned Dodd, solemnly. “Why, when we first came here there was an old woman a few miles down the road who beat anything I ever knew for simplicity. She was always doctoring people in the very simplest ways, and her rules were simple, too.”

“What were some of them?” asked Mrs. Congrove. “I’ve always thought the modern schools of medicine put us to a lot of unnecessary trouble.”

“No doubt about it at all,” replied Dodd. “Now, this old woman used to depend a great deal upon such a trifling and common thing as the bark of the slippery elm.”

“For what?”

“Oh, either as an emetic or a physic,” said Dodd. “Her instructions were to peel it up if it was to be

used as an emetic, and down for a physic." Then, regretfully, "Things are so much more complicated and expensive these days. That's just one illustration of her simple methods. And I knew of a case of an old soldier who demanded the music of the fife and drum while his leg was being amputated. That was a sufficient anæsthetic for him."

"Truly, we are departing from the simple life," laughed Mrs. Congrove. "Music would never answer that purpose now."

"Well, I don't know," returned Dodd, gravely. "That would depend on the music. I've heard some that would make the agony of the amputation of a leg seem insignificant by comparison. The music would hurt so that you wouldn't have time to think of the leg."



CHAPTER XXI.

A TIP FROM DAKE WAKELEY

DAKE WAKELEY did a remarkable thing, — so remarkable that he was surprised at himself. In all the time he had lived in the vicinity of Old Mission, no one could recall that he ever had gone out of his way to do a favour. But now Dake tramped four miles through the woods to tell Dodd something that he ought to know. However, there were a great many people who would do more for Dodd than for any one else, and in after years Dodd occasionally mentioned this unprecedented act of Dake's as an answer to the criticisms by Mrs. Dodd.

"You never can tell," Dodd would say, "whether you're doing a foolishly generous thing or merely making an investment. You remember how easy

I was with Wakeley, when I let myself get the worst of it, and you remember what it paid."

Then Mrs. Dodd, although still holding that Dodd was frequently unjust to himself in his consideration for others, would smile at him affectionately and let him have his own way. For Dake had broken all records by walking four miles to do Dodd a good turn.

"I don't feel jest right 'bout that five-dollar deal," announced Dake, upon his arrival at the Dodd farm.

"Neither do I," returned Dodd, "but I didn't think it would bother you."

"No," said Dake, apparently missing the point of this, "it looks like I got the worst of it."

"You got the worst of it!" exclaimed Dodd, in astonishment. "Say, Dake, did you ever get the best of anything?"

"Never," replied Dake, promptly. "I'm the most unluckiest feller that ever lived. That there court business cost me sixty-five dollars."

While Dodd had always held that Dake Wakeley was perfectly honest in his contention, merely being blinded by miserly self-interest, this calm assertion fairly took his breath away.

"If I gave you outright the ground your cabin

stands on," remarked Dodd, finally, "I suppose there would still be something to kick about."

"Well," admitted Dake, "it would seem sorter mean not to throw in the garden. But you ain't so bad as some, Dodd," he added, flatteringly. "Some folks, bein' in your place, would have kicked me off when we got riled up over that there timber deal. Some folks would have been that mad that they'd go out for revenge when they had to put up any cash. I give you credit, Dodd, fer payin' up like a man. Course you had the best of it, but there's lots would get mad jest the same, s' long 's the judge didn't give 'em every bit they claimed. An' I got thinkin' it over, Dodd, an' I see how you could get even with me if you felt like to be mean, an' you didn't do it, but paid right up cheerful, so I says to myself, 'He's honest, anyhow: he thinks he's right an' he ain't tryin' to beat me.'"

"Oh, I'm honest," remarked Dodd.

"Looks like that to me," returned Dake. "Course it ain't so hard to be honest when you got the best of it, anyhow, but I can't help thinkin' how mean some folks would be, havin' your power, so I says, 'Dodd's all right,' an' here I am."

"Well, what do you want?" asked Dodd.

"I want to show you that I don't cherish no

hard feelin's fer the way you beat me out, so I come to say that there's folks livin' in your cottage."

"Oh, the Indians may have put up there for a night," returned Dodd, "although it's strange they should do so without coming to me first," he added, thoughtfully. "They've never used the cottage but twice, when driven there by storms, and both times with my knowledge and consent. There's been no storm to drive them there lately, either."

"They ain't Injuns," asserted Wakeley, "an' I seen 'em there two times. I was goin' by last night an' they had a light in the big room."

"Up here," remarked Dodd, "I've found people who are pretty free with other people's property, but the white man isn't as careful as the Indian, and white strangers are a big risk. They might set fire to the place. Are they there now, Dake?"

"I come that way to see," replied Dake, "an' I cut into the woods to the side when I come by. There was a feller sittin' on the steps, smokin' a pipe."

"All right, Dake. Much obliged to you," said Dodd. "I'll go down and see about it. It's most likely a camping-party from the other side of the bay that has stopped over for a day or two to fish. But they might be courteous enough to look me up."

Dodd leisurely sauntered down the road leading to the bay, and presently turned into the path that made a short cut to Terrace Cottage.

"Some day," he mused, "some neighbour will want to borrow that cottage, and will ask me to take it over and bring it back."

Dodd had no thought except that some camping or fishing party was making free with his property, and he had no objection so long as he was assured that they would take proper care of it. Consequently, he made no attempt to approach by stealth, but took the direct route to the cottage. There was no one on the porch when he came in sight of it, but a man's coat, thrown carelessly on one of the steps, showed that some one had been there and that he probably would be back. The porch was small and did not face the bay, that being to one side of the house, so Dodd came up to it without getting in sight of the shore, which proved to be fortunate. He made no attempt to conceal himself until he saw a white cloth mask lying beside the coat. Then it suddenly dawned upon him that this was a serious matter, and he stopped short. If there was any one in the house, it was too late for him to retreat, for he was in plain view from the front windows. There were no signs of life, however, and he could see that the front room was

empty, so he retired a little, and made a circuit among the trees to the barn in the rear. There he came upon a lot of chicken feathers.

"One mystery is solved," he mused, as he recalled the neighbours' complaints of thefts.

From the middle terrace, on which the house rested, there was a steep descent to the lower terrace, which had a width of about two hundred yards before reaching the water. A rustic stairway, to the west of the cottage, reached a path on the lower terrace, and the path led to the water's edge. Dodd moved forward cautiously to a point near this stairway, which gave him a view of the path and the bay beyond, the shore view being cut off by the great trees everywhere else. On the terrace below he could see a man, without his coat, leisurely following the path to the bay, and far out over the bay a sailboat was approaching.

"Those Elk Rapids bandits stole a sailboat when they escaped," thought Dodd.

He crept back, around the rear of the house, to the shelter of the trees to the west, and paused a moment to decide what he should do. These men, he decided, were the bandits for whom the authorities had been seeking, and for whose capture a reward of \$2,000 had been offered. They were held to be responsible for a number of daring

robberies at Traverse City, and for innumerable minor depredations along nearly the whole length of Grand Traverse Bay. The boat gave the secret of their method of foraging; they were pirates rather than bandits. While the east side of the peninsula was being searched for them after the Elk Rapids affair, they unquestionably had rounded the point and temporarily secluded themselves somewhere on the west bay. They could not have been at Terrace Cottage all the time, but they might easily have made it their headquarters and have spent considerable time there, especially at night. No one ever came that way at night, and it was probable that no one had been above the first floor, either day or night, since Miss Marsden explored the place early in the summer. It was quite possible that there was booty stored in the upper part of the house.

"Well," thought Dodd, "pretty nearly everybody else has taken liberties with the cottage. It only needed this to make the list complete. But perhaps I'll get a little money out of it this time if they'll stay here a little longer."

He started back through the woods at unusual speed for him, for he was ordinarily most deliberate in his actions. It was probable, he thought, that the boat was returning from another raid.

In any event, it was practically certain that quick action by the authorities would enable them to catch the whole gang, and the reward —

“I could use that,” said Dodd, as he hurried along. “It would clean things up and give me a start on next season that would enable me to forge ahead, — that is, if I turn it over to Mrs. Dodd. I never could keep anything of my own myself, although I guess I’ve been pretty careful of other people’s property and affairs.”

Which was true. Dodd was one of those strange contradictions sometimes found, — careless and impulsive in the management of his own finances, but cold, cautious, and resourceful in handling the affairs of others.

At the barn he hastily hitched a horse to a cart, and, calling Leonard in from the field, started with him for Old Mission. He wanted company. After the dull uneventfulness of peninsula life, this unexpected sensation seemed to make it necessary that he should have some one with whom to discuss it.

“I’ve found the bandits,” he announced, briefly, as they drove along.

“What!” cried Leonard.

“They’re at Terrace Cottage,” explained Dodd.

“For heaven’s sake, let’s get them!” urged Leonard, thoughtlessly.

"Of course," said Dodd, "but don't let's let them get us. There's no reward for being killed or captured by them."

"But the men on the farm!" persisted Leonard. "We could muster a dozen altogether."

"With one old shotgun, a few pitchforks, and perhaps a revolver or two," said Dodd. "I haven't got anything but a shotgun, and I don't think you could find more than two pistols among the men. We don't go much on firearms up here."

"You're right, of course," returned Leonard, cooling down. "It looked like such a fine thing to round up those fellows that I let my enthusiasm run away with me. I was thinking of the reward, too. You ought to get that, Mr. Dodd."

"That goes to the man who furnishes the authorities with information that leads to their arrest, with \$200 for the capture of any individual member alone," explained Dodd. "Anyhow, I'm getting old enough so that I'd a little rather let the police or the deputies do the fighting. I never was much of a fighting man, anyway," he added, drifting into one of his musings, "although I can see its advantage to the general public."

"I don't see where that comes in," retorted Leonard. "Speaking generally, and putting aside

specific instances, what does fighting do for the general public?"

"It educates it," replied Dodd. "War is a great educator. What did you know about the Philippines before the war with Spain?"

"Mighty little," admitted Leonard.

"What did you know of Manchuria before war was declared between Japan and Russia?"

"Practically nothing."

"It takes war to make you study geography," said Dodd; "it takes war to teach you where the things you use come from. The price of something goes up, and you ask why. 'War,' says the dealer. 'Thunder and guns!' you exclaim, 'I didn't know we got that from the war zone.' You find that you have a personal interest in that war, while you previously thought you were nothing but an idle spectator; you begin to look things up and do a little thinking on your own account. You find that you have more ties than you ever supposed, and that what affects your brother in some far-off land indirectly affects you. Then some products of your own country go up, and you are told that some belligerent is buying for its armies and decreasing the visible supply, so you are moved to give a little consideration to the law of supply and demand. Thus you have learned something about the people,

the geography, the products, and the needs of some country or countries to which you had previously given no thought, and of the influence of that country's course upon your own life. It makes you study. I don't advocate war, but it's a great teacher."

"Well," returned Leonard, "that has nothing to do with the little question of fighting that we have on hand now. I wonder if they will get those fellows without loss of life. Say, it's lucky that no one has been to the cottage recently, isn't it?"

"Perhaps," said Dodd, "but I have an idea they have been there only occasionally at night, and, if they have stored any booty there, it's probably up in the attic. Very likely we could have gone there almost any day without noticing anything wrong, unless we happened to run on the feathers back of the kitchen. Do you think," he asked, thoughtfully, "that Dake Wakeley is entitled to part of this reward, if I get it?"

"Certainly not," answered Leonard. "Dake gave you notice of some trespassing on your property, but he did not discover the bandits, and he did not notify the authorities or assist in their capture. Now, Mr. Dodd," Leonard went on, more earnestly, "if you're going to hunt for an excuse to give away what is rightfully yours, I'm going

to report the matter to Mrs. Dodd, and see that she takes charge of the cash."

Dodd laughed.

"You have discovered the only person I'm afraid of," he said. "I think perhaps I'd better get the reward before I dispose of it. I believe even Mrs. Dodd would commend that course. At any rate, I know she wouldn't let me spend the \$2,000 I made by raising the price of my farm, and I had to admit that there was a good deal of sense in the arguments she used."

"What were they?"

"Why, she pointed out that I couldn't spend it because I didn't have it, which seemed to me, on mature reflection, a very reasonable view."

At Old Mission, Dodd decided, after advising with Leonard, to call up Traverse City by telephone. He had intended to merely report the facts to the Old Mission authorities, but Leonard insisted that they could do nothing, and probably would themselves report the matter to Traverse City. Old Mission was too small to boast of a police force, and its sole reliance in such a case would have to be on a posse of farmers, while Traverse could send officers in a steamer or a launch.

"We might as well have taken our own men and tried to capture them as to turn the thing over

to any one at Old Mission," Leonard urged, "and, to avoid complications in the matter of the reward, you want to report it to headquarters yourself. The reward was offered from Traverse City, and that's where these fellows will have to be taken if captured."

"I guess you're right," admitted Dodd. "I don't want them to have time to escape, but men can get out from Traverse pretty quick, even if they have to come by boat to Neahtawanta and drive over. I'll try it that way."

The officials at Traverse City were greatly excited by the news that Dodd gave them, the more so because there had been some bold depredations on the west peninsula the night before, — the peninsula from which Dodd had seen the sailboat coming, — and they promised that a strong detail of men would be sent down immediately. Coached by Leonard, Dodd cautioned them to send a launch, so that the sailboat could be overtaken in case of flight, but to have the party landed from the launch some distance south of the cottage, as any attempt to land near it would alarm the men sought.

"We'll send a small party by launch to cut off escape by water," was the reply, "and a larger party will be landed at Neahtawanta, and go on

from there by land, to make the capture if possible."

On the way back to the farm, Dodd and Leonard were too much engrossed in the near approach of what promised to be a thrilling adventure to wander into the amusing and interesting little verbal byways ordinarily so favoured by Dodd. They discussed various ways of approaching and surrounding the cottage and of surprising its possible inmates. There was a shed door, according to Dodd, that could be reached with little chance of being observed from any of the windows, provided no one was in the kitchen, and the door from this shed to the kitchen could be broken down easily, if found to be locked. But Dodd believed it would be open.

Leaving Dodd to put up the horse, when they reached the farm, Leonard wandered to the front of the house, to pass the time as best he could in his excited state until the arrival of the officers. Mrs. Congrove looked up from a book, as he appeared, and nodded to him pleasantly.

"You see I am left alone," she said. "Jessie is too strenuous for me. She has gone down to say good-bye to the cottage before we —"

"The cottage!" exclaimed Leonard, startled.

"Why, yes. She went down there about the time you started away with Mr. Dodd."

Leonard darted back to the barn, his face white and haggard in an instant.

"Dodd! Dodd!" he cried. "Miss Marsden is at the cottage! Went down an hour ago!"

Then he turned and made for the road to the bay. Dodd, who was leading the horse into the barn, dropped the halter, and started after Leonard at a surprising pace. Passing the building in which his "office" was located, he paused just long enough to get an old shotgun, and then continued toward the bay, followed closely by Ackerman, who appeared just in time to see Dodd running down the hill with a gun. Ackerman knew nothing of the nature of the trouble, but it was enough for him to know that there was trouble somewhere.

Part way down the hill Leonard met three Indian bucks and three squaws slowly plodding up, and it flashed across his mind that they might prove their devotion and gratitude to Dodd in this emergency. An Indian ought to be able to fight, and his presence certainly would disconcert any ordinary lawbreaker.

"Robbers in the cottage!" he said, stopping in front of them. "Dodd's cottage! Come and drive them out!"

The Indians looked at him blankly, and then at each other, but made no movement.

"White woman in danger!" he cried, desperately. "Help free her!"

The Indians merely grunted, and, with an exclamation of anger, Leonard was starting on, when Dodd caught up.

"Big John!" gasped the breathless Dodd. "Fight! For me!"

Then Dodd darted from the road into the path that made a short cut to the cottage (which Leonard had momentarily forgotten), and the three bucks, led by Big John, silently followed, while the squaws squatted in the road, content to learn what it was all about later. ✓

Leonard and Ackerman plunged in after them, and, in single file, compelled to let Dodd set the pace (which was not nearly fast enough for Leonard), the six made their way by the woodland path to the point where it joined the terrace road, when Dodd slackened his pace and turned aside, the better to approach the house unobserved.

CHAPTER XXII.

MISS MARSDEN'S ADVENTURE

MISS MARSDEN and Mrs. Congrove were to leave for home in a few days, and Miss Marsden had been making farewell pilgrimages to the many little nooks that she had discovered and enjoyed during her stay at Old Mission. She was going back to the dull routine of life with her aunt on the Carroll farm, and Jessie Marsden, natural as it was for her to work, had learned to hate farm drudgery. And the farm to which she was returning was far different from the farm she was leaving. The latter was big and beautiful, and was identified with a restfulness that she had found nowhere else. However, she told herself that there was more reason for gratitude than regret, for word had been received that Mrs. Congrove's affairs were in better shape than had been supposed at the time of her husband's death. She would have a modest income, — small, but still sufficient to make the future no longer the distressing problem it had seemed to be.

This made it possible to plan definitely, and they had quickly settled on a date for their departure.

Then Miss Marsden had evolved a sentimental desire to make a last visit to all the familiar places, — little rustic retreats to which she had often retired, the paths along which she had strolled to gather pine-needles for the sofa pillows with which she had been busy much of the time. Mrs. Congrove went with her occasionally, but the places had not the same associations for her that they had for her sister, for she had given them less attention on previous visits and never had stolen away to any of them alone. In fact, the natural beauties of the place did not, and could not, appeal to Mrs. Congrove as they did to Miss Marsden, for the former's thoughts were on other things, while the latter was experiencing a freedom that she never had known on the Carroll farm, — which was the misfortune, and not the fault, of the Carrolls. Mrs. Congrove, too, had demanded less attention as her strength increased and the first shock of her husband's death wore away, had gradually taken her part in the quiet life of the place, and had derived pleasure and benefit from occasional association with others. So Miss Marsden had more time to herself, and now she was going alone for a last visit to the cottage.

On the way, her thoughts were busy with Dodd's remark, "He isn't so bad as you think. Why, he hasn't any money at all." She laughed as she thought of the way he had blurted this out, and of his crestfallen look as he retired, but somehow the statement had made an impression. What did it mean? Was it possible that Leonard was not posing, but really and earnestly working? It was a foolish kind of work for a man of his training and ability, but it might be temporarily expedient. If not merely a pose, there certainly must be some good reason for it. In any event, if he were not financially independent, it threw a very different light on his action. But she had understood, and from him, that he had an income that left him no incentive to work. Possibly, Dodd, in his friendship, had undertaken to deceive her, but that was not like Dodd.

Speculating after this fashion, she turned into the woodland path, and later left that to pluck some wild flowers. Lured from one to another, she finally emerged from the wood near the back of the cottage, and noticed that the door of the shed was open.

"I'll go in that way," she said to herself.

Passing through the shed into the kitchen, she discovered some evidences of recent occupation in various scraps of food lying about, but it did not

disturb her in the least, for she knew of Dodd's good-natured acquiescence in the occasional use of the cottage.

"He said the Indians were neat and careful," she commented. "I suppose this is a man's idea of neatness."

The house was not furnished, except for two or three old wooden chairs, and she found nothing but these and a blanket in the parlour. The blanket, however, made her pause. That seemed to indicate that whoever had been there was coming back, and a sudden chill of fear swept over her. She was alone in a deserted house in the woods. They had been so quiet and secluded at the Dodd farm that no thought of possible harm had ever come to her in any of her rambles in the woods, but was there not danger now? Who might these men, or this man, be? She could not say whether one or more had occupied the house, but she would be at his, or their, mercy if caught there, and the blanket —

Jessie Marsden was suddenly and unaccountably overcome by unreasoning fear. She, who had enjoyed solitude, was instantly almost panic-stricken in her loneliness. She might tell herself that it was only the Indians, who were held to be harmless and friendly, or some other to whom Dodd had given the privilege of the cottage, but she was

afraid, — fearfully and inexplicably afraid; she who always had been so self-reliant. Never before had she experienced such a feeling of feminine helplessness. She rushed to the front door, threw it open — and recoiled. A man's coat and a white cloth mask lay on the steps. A mask evidently improvised from a handkerchief. It flashed upon her that there had been something psychological in that feeling of fear; the danger had impressed itself upon her in spite of her reason. There could be no doubt now that the cottage had been occupied by desperate characters, and one at least was still in the vicinity.

She backed in and shut the door, deciding to make her escape through the shed; but, before she could turn, she heard voices outside, and knew that some men were coming up the rustic stairway from the lower terrace. To add to her alarm, one of the men was swearing volubly and horribly, and the glimpse she caught of them through the west window showed them to be rough, brutal-looking fellows, whom any woman would fear to meet alone. They were so close now that escape was impossible, for she could not leave by either the front or the back way without almost a certainty of being seen before she could get to the shelter of the trees. Behind her was a stairway, leading to the floor

above, and up this she went, her heart beating wildly, her face white, and her prized independence utterly gone. For once in her life she longed for the protection of man.

Another narrow and steep stairway led to the attic, and she continued up this, fearing that, if she did not do it now, her strength would fail her when she had to do it later, in case the men ascended. In truth, Jessie Marsden was close to collapse. She was a strong girl in all the ordinary affairs of life, a resourceful girl in meeting the problems of the modern world, a brave girl in the face of hardship and misfortune, but this personal danger seemed so close and so fearful to her excited imagination that her knees trembled and her thoughts came incoherently. For a moment she could only realize that she was trapped by a gang of vicious and desperate outlaws, and that her predicament could be known to no one. She was no coward, but this was her first experience of physical danger, — a danger that apparently no effort of her own could avert. But she knew the need of calmness and strength, and she stretched herself prone on the floor, where she had sunk down, and forced herself to lie perfectly still, in an effort to recover her self-possession and the full control of her limbs. She heard only the confused murmur

of voices below, and gradually she was able to gain mastery of the effects of her fear, although not of the fear itself. Then she sat up and looked about her. Two sacks, that seemed to contain plunder of some sort, gave cause for further anxiety. Here was something that might bring one of them to the attic at any moment, and that would mean her discovery. If she could remain undiscovered until supper-time, her absence then would create uneasiness.

"But what will happen then?" she asked herself. "Gracie knows I came to the cottage, and some one will come to look for me without thought of danger. These outlaws won't let a man who locates them get away, if they can help it."

Almost the only possible hope of rescue might itself lead to a tragedy. She crept to the east window and looked out, half-hoping and half-fearing that she might see some one, but there was no sign of life among the trees. It was only a few yards to the shelter of the wood, and the chance of observation on that side was slight, as the principal rooms were on the side toward the bay. It was the one point where the house could be approached or left with reasonable hope of escaping discovery. But she could not well drop from a third-story

window. She might risk it from the second floor, however.

Jessie Marsden's nerve had returned. When she forced herself to lie quiescent, with relaxed muscles, until she could think connectedly, she gained a mastery that her will-power now enabled her to hold. She was afraid, desperately afraid, but she was no longer terror-stricken; she would do what she could to help herself. If she could reach the second floor, she would try a drop from the window and a dash into the woods.

Back to the stairway she crept, and listened. They were still in the main room on the first floor, their voices, except for an occasional oath, being indistinct. One man was evidently angry about something. It was her chance — No; they were coming up-stairs.

Scarcely daring to breathe, she lay at the top of the second stairway, listening. Were they coming all the way up? or would they stop on the second floor? One of them began the ascent to the attic, and her heart sank. She could feel the weakness overcoming her again, as she pictured herself the prisoner of these merciless brutes. Then she was given a respite.

"Don't be in such a damn hurry!" another of the men growled. "We ain't settled the thing yet."

"It's settled for me!" retorted the man on the second stairway. "It's up to me for a getaway right now! Why, you ain't got the sense of a calf! You tear up all one side of the bay when there ain't no need of it, an' then cross over in a boat that's stole an' bein' hunted for, an' shoot right in here in broad daylight. They got us spotted now, sure!"

"We had to do it," urged the other. "We wanted to lie low over there till night, but things was gettin' too hot."

"Who made 'em too hot!" exclaimed the man on the stairs, angrily. "You, with your damn foolishness. Why couldn't you go easy till we was ready to pull off the big job? A little snipin' was all right, but it was a fool trick to try to make a string of little rough and ready jobs that would send every farmer for fifty miles after his flintlock musket, an' get all the sheriffs an' constables excited. Why, you — — — — —," and he characterized his companion in unprintable language.

"Cut that out!" exclaimed the other. "We got in a tight corner an' had to do the best we could, an' now we're all goin' to make a break for it together. But where to? That's what we got to settle now."

"Sure it is," chimed in another voice. "The swag up there's in bags, to be got any time, but there's other things to be fixed up. Anyhow, the loose things in the front closet ought to be took out first."

The man on the stairway apparently surrendered to this argument, for Miss Marsden heard the men enter a room on the second floor. She could only catch an occasional word as they rummaged in a closet that they had evidently used as a storeroom, but she had heard enough to show that their appearance in force in daylight was unpremeditated, and that they contemplated flight under cover of darkness. This was reassuring in one way, but not in another, for one of them would surely come after the two bags up there, and the only place to hide was behind the partition that shut in the stairway, which would afford no concealment unless he happened to keep on one side of the attic. If he would only wait until dark, there might be a chance, but —

He was coming up now. She shuddered and felt the chill of despairing fear creep over her again. Then came a second respite.

"Keep your shirt on," growled the man who had interfered before. "Them things is ready, an' these ain't. We got to get these down first."

"Sure," said the third voice, and from the bottom of the lower stairway some one called: "What's holdin' you up there? Bring that loose truck down!"

"We was stoppin' to talk of cleanin' out old man Dodd afore we quit," retorted one of the men on the second floor.

"Not for me!" exclaimed the man below.

"Nor me," echoed several other voices below, showing there were at least six or seven men in the party.

"Why not?" asked the man above.

"Those two lads that mixed up over to Elk Rapids is there," was the reply. "The one that turned loose is bad enough for me, an' they say the other's worse. I'll take my chance with a gun or 'most any man, but I don't hunt for lads that can turn me upside down an' ram my head on the ground so quick I don't know what's happened. Humans is all right, but they're devils, or a lot of lyn' is bein' done."

"That's right," chimed in another, "an' this ain't the time to butt into a bad game."

"Hate to go away without nothin' to remember the old man by," growled the first speaker. "It don't look polite. Ain't there anything up there you want?"

"Well," replied the man below, with a coarse laugh, "they got some good-lookin' women up there, an' I wouldn't mind stealin' one of them, if it was anyways safe."

They all laughed at this sally, and Miss Marsden, shuddering again, heard the three on the second floor descending, with a bumping and a clattering that seemed to indicate that there were silver and articles of some bulk in the loot they had collected. From the bottom she heard the further growl: "We had to let Dodd alone first, 'cause it would get people lookin' for us here, an' we got to let him alone now 'cause he's got some strong-arm men of his own. An' women with jew'lry there, too."

Almost hopeless now, and with even a greater dread than before, she crept again to the window. Her second respite must be about at an end, and the man would surely come for the two bags this time. Perhaps it would be better to drop from the window, anyway. She might be stunned by the fall, she might break a leg or an arm, but — she might escape. Surely anything was better than to fall into the hands of these miscreants. She tried the window, and found that it opened noiselessly. She could sit by it, and, as a last resort —

A movement of the underbrush caught her eye and changed the current of her thoughts. For a

moment it seemed as if her heart stopped beating, and then she wanted to cry out in a very delirium of joy. A man was approaching cautiously, and behind him was another and yet another. And the first man — she realized on the instant that it was not *a* man, but *the* man; in that thrilling, critical moment she had time to feel a sense of elation, of joy, that relief should come in this form, with Ralph Leonard in the lead. Behind the first three were others, but she really distinguished and recognized only the leader. He was advancing cautiously, and his face — she could read in his face, not merely the anxiety of a man for a woman in danger, but the anguish and desperation of a lover who hopes and fears and asks only that he may meet whatever threatens, irrespective of the odds. The face was clear and distinct, as Leonard, keeping his body as much as possible under cover, let his eyes sweep the house and the clearing, until they rested on the face at the upper window. Then there came such an expression of relief as would have betrayed his heart instantly, even if she had not already read it. But she was as sure of him, and of herself, as if he had spoken and she had answered; it was like the passing of a flash of light, but she knew.

She cautioned him to silence by placing a finger on her lips, and then motioned to the rear of the

house, to indicate that their best chance was to enter that way. He nodded, and moved in that direction. She saw then that Dodd, Ackerman, and three Indians made up the rest of the party, and, with the exception of Dodd, who had an old shotgun, all were armed with clubs, secured as they came through the wood.

As she turned from the window, she heard a man coming up the stairs, and hastily placed herself behind the stairway partition. He would hardly discover her, she thought, before affairs on the lower floor claimed his attention. The partition merely enclosed the stairway opening, so it was small shelter to any one hiding, but it might easily keep her from sight for a few minutes.

He had, she judged, just reached the top step when the sound of a scuffle came from below. He paused to listen, and she could see his fingers grasping the edge of the partition. Suddenly, it dawned upon her that, if he went back, it would be one more for her rescuers to fight, and that he would come upon them from an unexpected quarter. She had been fearing he might come all the way up; now she feared he might turn back. Everything might depend upon this one man.

It was on inspiration that she acted; she did not reason, she did not plan, but suddenly she swung

around the end of that partition and put all her weight and all her strength into one fierce shove. The man, taken unawares, toppled, yelled, fell, and rolled to the floor below. At the same moment there came up from the first floor a most horrible, blood-curdling yell, in which there seemed to be blended a dozen voices, and Jessie Marsden, her overwrought nerves unable longer to endure the strain, fell in a swoon at the head of the attic stairs.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE FIGHT AT THE COTTAGE

WHEN the line of rescuers, led by Dodd, swerved from the woodland path, to approach the cottage under cover of the trees, Leonard's anxiety and impatience forced him, at the risk of a bad fall, to push to the front. He swung out from the line, and, dodging among the trees, soon got ahead of the Indians and was on even terms with Dodd. Ackerman, still ignorant of the cause of the excitement, but entirely satisfied with the prospect of a row of some sort, kept close at his heels, while the Indians, far from warlike in the cast-off toggery of civilization, merely followed where Dodd led. But Leonard had time to note that each of them carried a stout cudgel, and he himself picked up a short, heavy stick that made a fairly formidable weapon. Ackerman did the same, but later decided that the stick only interfered with the free play of those hands and arms that had won all former battles for him, so he discarded it.

As Leonard was passing Dodd, the latter checked him long enough to caution, "Careful, now. We've got to know what to do before we do it."

Leonard's impulse was to dash straight to the house and take chances, but, even in his excitement, he knew that Dodd was right and that they must first pause to learn something of the situation. No one knew how large the gang was, but it unquestionably was armed, and, unless surprised, would have a great advantage. Although he gave no thought to the danger to the attacking party, he knew that it would be worse than folly to jeopardize Miss Marsden's safety by any rashness. So he slacked up as he neared the clearing, and crept forward cautiously at the point where there would be the least danger of observation. Dodd seized this opportunity to turn to the Indians. Their fighting ability might be modified by contact with civilization, like their dress, but their yelling ability was not, and a real good Indian yell is an awe-inspiring thing, especially when it comes to one's ears unexpectedly.

"War-whoop, John," he said to the big leader. "Not now, but when fight starts. Scare white man!"

Big John grunted and explained briefly to the other two.

Leonard, meanwhile, was advancing carefully, with Ackerman just behind. His face was set, and his eyes alternately blazed fiercely and became pathetic as they reflected his anguish and doubt. He knew that the principal rooms of the cottage were on the opposite side, so they had a good chance of reaching it unobserved, but he could not tell where to make the attack. That would depend on where the men were. He swept the clearing with his eyes, and saw that no one was on watch outside, which was one thing in their favour. Then he let his gaze take in the side of the house, going from window to window, in the hope of gaining some clew to the situation inside, and, even before his eyes reached the attic window in their search, he became conscious of a figure there. A great, overwhelming joy filled his heart and was reflected in his face, for they were surely in time. He wanted to cry out and rush forward, but she placed a finger to her lips and then motioned to the shed door. He nodded, to show that he understood, and turned to those behind him.

"The shed door is open," he said. "If they're in the front of the house, as I think, we may get through the kitchen before we are discovered. We'll try it, but at the first cry of any sort, rush, — all rush! We must overwhelm them!"

"And yell!" added Dodd, turning to Big John.

"Plenty yell!" was the reply.

The order in which they crept to the shed door was: Leonard, Ackerman, Dodd, and the Indians. Dodd was no coward, but he resigned the leadership for two reasons: he could not hold Leonard back, and he had not the strength or activity to make the most of the first onslaught; it was better that the younger men should head the rush. At the shed door Leonard felt a strong hand laid on his shoulder, and Ackerman whispered: "This looks like my game." Leonard tried to shake off the hand, but it closed with a fiercer grip.

"It's mine," said Ackerman, determinedly. "I got to have it."

Leonard felt himself forced back into second place, but he was powerless in such a grip, and he dared not struggle or protest, lest he should alarm the outlaws.

Thus getting the lead, Ackerman passed into the shed, and then into the kitchen, with Leonard almost at his elbow. From the kitchen they could hear the men swearing and talking in the front of the house, and, with joy, Leonard noted that the way was clear to the room where they were busy packing their plunder. Ackerman paused and gathered himself for a rush, indicating by a motion that the man

nearest to them, who was stooping over a bundle, was his particular property.

"Now!" cried Leonard.

Ackerman made his dash, caught his stooping victim in his arms, and hurled him head-first into the pit of the stomach of a man who was just straightening up. The next instant he was astride of his first victim, and had secured possession of his revolver.

"Dodd's scrappers!" yelled one of the outlaws, and he jumped through a west window and made for the terrace stairway.

Then came the blood-curdling yell of the Indians, and the panic of the outlaws was complete.

"Hands up!" shouted Dodd, making a sweep of the room with his double-barrelled shotgun.

Three men were down, one thrown by Leonard as he followed Ackerman into the room; one man had gone through the window, and three, with a cry of "Injuns!" when they heard the yell and saw the brandished clubs back of Dodd, hastily pointed their hands heavenward.

"Git that man that's runnin', Dodd!" ordered Ackerman. "I got these."

Dodd stepped to the window and blazed away, just as the man reached the edge of the terrace.

With a yell, the fellow sprang into the air and rolled to the bottom.

"I'll bet he'll be picking bird-shot out of himself for a year," remarked Dodd, "and he won't want to sit down very much. Where's Leonard?"

Ackerman was so busy superintending the disarming of the outlaws, which was being done by Big John under the protection of the clubs of his comrades and Ackerman's captured revolver, that he had not noticed the absence of Leonard. The ridiculous ease of the victory amused and somewhat disgusted Ackerman, who liked a real fight, but the combination of a complete surprise, an Indian war-whoop, and the appearance of two men reputed to be able to juggle human beings would have routed a much more resourceful crowd. Ackerman also lacked a realization of the disconcerting effect of the exercise of his own remarkable strength. To have one man used as a catapult to knock the breath out of another would bewilder and overwhelm almost any one. But it seemed to Ackerman that these men had been taken like so many boys.

Leonard, meanwhile, had lost all interest in affairs on the lower floor. After the first rush, when he had tripped and violently thrown the first man in his way, his ears had caught the cry and the fall

on the stairs above, and the fate of those below ceased to be of any moment. He went up the stairs two steps at a time, and at the top of the first flight found the man Miss Marsden had thrown down. With a push and a kick he sent the fellow rolling and bumping down the next flight, and then continued to the attic.

At first he thought the girl lying there, so white and still, was dead, and a sob of anguish rose to his lips. He knelt beside her, raised her head on his arm, and then noted that she was breathing. Tenderly he took her up in his arms, to carry her down-stairs, and paused, as the sound of conflict came from below. He could not take her there; he could not leave her and go back. There was nothing of cowardice in this: he had no thought for his own safety, but heart and mind were centred in the girl. All else was crowded into the background and forgotten.

As he stood at the head of the stairs, hesitating, he heard Ackerman instructing the Indians to disarm the outlaws, and knew that the battle was over, so he descended with his burden. At the head of the lower stairway she opened her eyes slowly, gave him a faint smile, and said, simply, "I'm glad it's you."

Trifling words, but what a joy they carried to

his heart! Forgetting the situation, her weakness, everything, he almost crushed her in a delirious embrace.

"You hurt me," she said, faintly, but she still let him hold her, and, as his arms relaxed a little, one of her arms stole about his neck, and her eyes closed again. He would have stood there, at the head of the stairs, content simply to hold her thus, until he dropped from fatigue, had he not heard Dodd asking for him.

"Perhaps I'd better try to walk now," she said, as he moved. "It might look better."

"In a minute," he replied, and, still holding her helpless (and contented) in his arms, he kissed her.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE RESULT OF THE FIGHT



WHEN the excitement had subsided sufficiently to enable one to discover exactly how matters stood, a peculiar condition of affairs was found to exist. Eight outlaws had been captured by "three Indians, two white men, and a lover," as Dodd expressed it later. Dodd held that it would be unfair to classify Leonard as an Indian, and as for including him among the captors, why — "Oh, of course, he captured a girl," Dodd conceded, whimsically, "but I don't understand she made much of a fight." Dodd likewise conceded that Leonard

had upset a man in his rush for the stairs. "But," he protested, "the man got in the way, and a fellow who's in a hurry to see his best girl hasn't time to dodge heedless people. It was an accident."

These comments did not come immediately, but were interjected into the discussion that followed when they had all gathered at the main house, and even then Dodd made unnecessary trouble for himself by trying to restrain his sense of humour from embarrassing Miss Marsden, — "only to find," he explained later, "that she was too contented and preoccupied to be disturbed by anything. I could have joked all I pleased."

But, as explained, there was little opportunity for joking while they remained at the cottage. Dodd, the moment he saw that Ackerman and the Indians had the situation well in hand, went to see what had become of the man he had "peppered" from behind. And he went cautiously. He knew that the man was armed, and a man who has had a few hundred bird-shot driven into his anatomy from the rear is inclined to be irritable; he would probably like nothing better than to get one good shot at the man who had thus humiliated him, no matter if he hung for it later. The fellow who feels as if he had just been stung by a thousand nettles isn't worrying very much over what happens to him

at a later date. So Dodd, leaving the house through the window from which he had fired, moved to the edge of the terrace in the most approved border warfare fashion, even lying flat on his stomach to peer through the bushes that skirted the edge.

"This is mighty serious to me," he mused, "but I suppose it would look mighty funny to any one else. I must be pretty clumsy at it, but I'd rather be a joke than a dead man."

He had reason to be thankful for his caution, too, for the outlaw below had a revolver in his hand, and, in impotent rage, was looking for a human target. He had been stunned for a moment by his fall, and, with returning consciousness, came a strong desire to do almost anything except sit down; he didn't believe that he ever would want to sit down again. This feeling had been impressed upon him strongly when he instinctively assumed a sitting posture, for purposes of observation, and then fell over on his stomach again, for purposes of comfort. Finally, however, he had succeeded in getting on his feet, and, revolver in hand, his eyes searched the ridge above for some sign of the man he held responsible for his unpremeditated jump.

Dodd, peering through the bushes above, noted the awkward position in which he stood, and the

way he swept the terrace with his revolver, swearing volubly and emphatically all the time.

"It would relieve his mind a good deal if he could get a shot at me," reasoned Dodd, "but I don't think I want his mind relieved."

Seeing no one, the man started painfully along the path to the bay, still holding his revolver ready for action, and turning frequently with a menacing motion toward the terrace.

"This won't do at all," argued Dodd, "but I don't want to hurt that fellow any more. If I give him many more perforations, he'll have to stand on his head to keep from leaking. But what can I do? If I yell at him, he'll shoot at me, and he's not shooting bird-shot, either. I've just got to discourage him a little more first."

Dodd really did dislike to take that second shot, although the way the men had used his cottage displeased him greatly, but he really could see nothing else to do. The man, on the lower terrace, was making his way slowly to the bay and the boat. He was armed and desperately angry. Given warning of any kind, he would shoot first and talk afterward. And Dodd did not see why he should let a little additional discomfort for the outlaw weigh against a chance of death for himself. So he poked his shotgun through the bushes, endeavoured to

avoid a vital spot by aiming at the man's legs, and blazed away. The man yelled and collapsed, but got on his feet again almost instantly.

"Don't do it again!" he shouted, and, in the pain and despair of the moment, seeing no enemy, but feeling that another charge would follow immediately if he did not demonstrate his wish to surrender, he hurled his revolver away from him and held up his hands.

"Come back up here!" ordered Dodd, and he added to himself, "It's a good thing he doesn't know I'm out of ammunition and both barrels empty. But the things people don't know are changing history every day."

When Dodd and his limping prisoner reached the cottage, they found the other outlaws safely bound and disarmed, and Ackerman preparing to take them to the house. Dodd asked for Leonard immediately, and then he heard Miss Marsden suggesting that she thought she could walk now, whereat he laughed. The strain relieved, everything seemed to amuse Dodd.

"If you can't," he called, "I'll have the carriage sent down from the house."

"Oh, I'm sure I can," came the reply, and the next moment she appeared, blushing a little and seeming rather weak.

"I don't think," said Dodd, solicitously, to Leonard, "that she ought to be asked to walk to the house — without help."

Somehow Dodd seemed to understand pretty well what had happened. Perhaps, in view of Leonard's mad rush up the stairs, any man would have surmised the result of the meeting at the top, even if he hadn't heard Miss Marsden's suggestion that she really thought she could walk now. Anyhow, Dodd found a vent for his humour, and Leonard laughed, as if the circumstances made the teasing a matter of no importance to him.

"Can I help you in any way?" asked Leonard.

"No," replied Dodd; "not *me*."

A moment later Dodd turned to say something to Leonard, and Leonard had disappeared. So had Miss Marsden.

"We'll march our prisoners back by the road," said Dodd to Ackerman. "We couldn't watch them so well in the path. And," he added, "it might be dangerous to do any shooting in the path, if one of them should try to make a break. You never can be sure that somebody isn't using that path, especially now."

So the prisoners, tightly bound as to their hands, were marched along the road under guard of three Indians with clubs, Dodd with his shotgun, and

Ackerman with captured revolvers sticking from every pocket. Ackerman bantered the men a little as they walked along, Dodd reproved them for using his property, and Leonard, only a short distance away, heard them pass. Leonard was in no hurry at all. Miss Marsden had been so overcome by the strain and shock of her experiences that it seemed imperative to move in the most leisurely fashion, in addition to giving her considerable assistance. And she seemed to be in no greater hurry than Leonard.

"I suppose," he remarked, as the sound of voices came through the trees, "that we ought not to have left as we did. I should have helped take care of these men."

"They were bound and helpless before we left," she argued. "It would have done no good to keep with them, and," shuddering, "I wanted to get away from those horrible men. You can't imagine what I suffered in that attic."

The path was so narrow that men coming along it had to go single file, but somehow there seemed to be room for two now, and the two required even less room than before when her shudder led him to try to reassure her.

"I can imagine it," he replied softly, "because I know what I suffered up to the moment that I

saw your face in the window, and knew that you were still safe. You can't imagine the thrill, the spasm of joy it gave me."

"I can imagine it," she replied, repeating his words and smiling up into his face, "because I know the relief and joy unspeakable that came to me when I saw you peering through the bushes."

They walked on silently for a moment. Then she said, retrospectively:

"I didn't understand, Ralph."

"Neither did I," he returned.

"I mean," she explained, "I didn't understand myself."

"And did you understand me?" he asked.

"No," she answered. "I thought you were posing. I was awfully unjust —"

"Are you sure now that I am not posing?"

"Yes; I am sure."

"What makes you sure?"

"I don't know," she answered, thoughtfully.

"Mr. Dodd said something that set me to thinking, but it isn't that. I would know it anyhow — now. I — I — well, I just know it."

"You mean," he said, very softly, "that you love and you trust."

"Yes," she returned, "I love and I trust. I know it because I know you, and my heart tells

me. I was unjust, unfair, mean, spiteful; I knew it when I saw your face in — ”

But he could not let her talk thus of herself, and he took the easiest, most effective, and most delightful method of stopping it.

“I am to blame,” he finally found time to say. “I made a secret of my reasons, and then blamed you for not understanding them. I put a mean, despicable interpretation upon your changed manner when the fault was mine.”

“No; mine,” she insisted.

“Mine,” he retorted, and again prevented her from replying until he could go on. “But I did lose everything,” he said. “A few hundreds may be saved, but I am and shall be dependent on what I can earn.”

“I am glad,” she said, simply.

“Glad!” he repeated.

“Very glad,” she said. “I would rather live on \$1,200 a year, made by my husband, than on \$12,000 a year, made by my husband’s father or grandfather. To that extent only is my wonderful independence left. I will, I must be independent of all but my husband. But, oh, Ralph! I was so much mistaken in myself in everything else; I was so self-sufficient; I thought I was so strong, so resourceful, so capable, and find I’m as weak and foolish and

dependent as any other woman, and — and — I'm glad of it, Ralph. I don't want to be independent; I don't want to fight the battle of life alone; I just want some one stronger to take up the fight, and let me help all I can. That's what I meant when I said I didn't understand, Ralph; I didn't, for I've never wanted to depend on any one else before."

"But you do now?" he asked.

"I do now," she answered, and they walked on in silence. Then she said, "But he must be independent and strong."

"Dearest," he answered, "I am only just learning what independence is; I am only just learning the joy of asking a woman to let me work for her, — not merely to provide for her, but to work for her. I shall be really independent."

"Of all but me," she said, quickly.

"Of all but you," he answered.

"For I must help in some ways," she added.

"Without you I would be useless and helpless; with you I shall be strong and earnest and of some real worth, for you have taught me —"

"Hush!" she interposed. "We have helped each other, but I cannot teach my prince."

They were a long time getting to the house. Dodd said he did not see how it was possible to walk so slowly.

CHAPTER XXV.

SOME TROUBLESOME POINTS

THEY were already discussing the question of the reward when Leonard arrived at the house, and some winded horses, covered with lather, showed that the party coming by way of Neahtawanta was on hand to take charge of the outlaws.

"The reward," one of the arrivals was saying, "goes to Mr. Dodd. He can make such disposition of it as he wishes, but he is the one who has met the terms of the offer. He found these fellows, he notified us, and he has now turned them over to us."

"I didn't find them," protested Dodd. "Dake Wakeley found them."

"Dake Wakeley didn't find them," interposed Leonard, fearful that Dodd would evade the good fortune that had come to him. "Dake Wakeley doesn't even know that they've been found yet. He had the chance to find them and to notify the

authorities, but he merely told a neighbour that somebody was trespassing, which was all he knew."

"He has no claim on the reward," asserted the official. "You may do what you please for him, but he didn't notify us and he didn't turn any of the men over to us. We can't go back of those two points without getting in a tangle."

"You don't think I got these men alone, do you?" retorted Dodd. "Why, Ackerman led the charge."

"Who planned it?" persisted Leonard. "Who kept us from breaking right out into the open, where we would have made a fine target? Who got the Indians to help? Who steered us to just the right point to make the attack, and told us just how to make it?"

"I didn't notice a man named Leonard holding back very much," asserted Dodd, rebelliously.

"Oh, that was different," retorted Leonard. "I had a reason, and I don't count in this little matter, anyway. I didn't get any bandits."

"What did you get?" asked Dodd, maliciously.

"I got the reward, the only reward I want or will touch," answered Leonard, promptly, and with a smile at Dodd. "I went for it, and I got it. The other reward is too trifling."

The official and his party looked rather bewil-

dered, but no one seemed disposed to explain the matter to them.

"I shall report," announced the officer, at last, "that the reward belongs to Mr. Dodd. I really don't see how we can recognize any one else in the transaction. Of course, Mr. Dodd can do what he pleases in the matter of sharing with any who have rendered him assistance."

"Render me assistance!" exclaimed Dodd. "I only helped out a little when Ackerman got going. Why, he made a battering-ram of one man to knock the wind out of another."

"Yes," admitted Ackerman, thoughtfully, "I guess I got the lad that I put my grip on. I 'most always count on havin' a man when I close on him. I'd feel hurt in the pride if one got away."

"You did more than that," said Dodd.

"There's only one I put my hands on," returned Ackerman. "What I get my hands on is mine, but that's all. How much does one pay?"

"Why, the offer was \$200 for each individual member of the gang, caught separately, or \$2,000 for the whole gang," replied the officer. "You might straighten it up with Mr. Dodd by taking the \$200 for the one you claim."

"Suits me," said Ackerman.

Dodd was disposed to insist that Ackerman

should have at least an eighth of the reward, if he refused to admit that more than one capture should be placed to his credit, but Ackerman pleaded that \$200 at one time would get him into all the trouble he could stand.

"I've got into jail on less'n a hunderd," he explained. "You give me two hunderd, an' a job when I git back, an' I'll go to Chicago an' blow myself. This place'll look mighty good to me after blowin' in two hunderd."

Dodd had to laugh at this plan of enjoying the reward, but he knew enough of men to realize how futile it was to try to get Ackerman to spend his money in any but his own way.

"I like you, Ackerman," he said, "and, just to make sure that you'll come back, there will be another hundred to your credit here."

"I couldn't have that much an' not be restless," returned Ackerman. "Make it twenty-five an' I'll go you. I never was shy of work when I wanted it, but this place is goin' to look awful good to me when I finish up, — lots better'n a job on a lake boat or hustlin' freight or doin' any of the other things I've tried."

So this was settled, and Dodd's thoughts turned to the Indians. He thought they were entitled to

something, but they would not know what to do with any considerable sum of money.

"How much, John?" he asked of the Indian, who had been an attentive listener.

"Two dollar," was the reply.

"Oh, you can use more than that."

"Two dollar cash, five dollar corn, potato, what need."

"John," said Dodd, after a pause, "it will be five dollars cash each, and anything that we grow on the farm whenever you want it."

"Dodd plenty good to John," grunted the big buck.

"It doesn't seem to me right," remarked Dodd, thoughtfully. "Of course, that money will do me a lot of good right now. It looks bigger than any \$20,000 ever did in my banking days. But I can't see how I am entitled to so much of it."

"I'll tell you how it is," said Leonard. "You kept the gang intact. Without you, one would have escaped, and, if one had escaped, the other seven would have been worth only \$1,400. That makes the one you followed and brought back worth \$600 alone. Add to that the fact that you found them, notified the authorities, and showed the method and place of attack —"

The old whimsical smile had appeared on Dodd's face, and now he interrupted.

"Do you know how I felt with that old gun?" he asked.

"No," answered Leonard.

"I felt like a young rooster I've got out back by the barn," explained Dodd. "I never was much for firearms, anyway, and the only times that old shotgun has been used in years have been when some of the farm-hands have borrowed it to try to discourage a hawk or a skunk. I hadn't had a noise like that so close to my ear in fifteen or twenty years, and — Well, say! come out and see the rooster."

He led the way and the others followed.

"Let those ex-tenants of mine come, too," he said, indicating the outlaws. "They're not going to see much of anything funny for some time."

So the outlaws, still bound, and now guarded by the men who had come after them, were marched to the barn with the rest.

"This rooster," explained Dodd, "is just learning to crow, and he scares himself. Just watch him."

The rooster in question would make careful and nervous preparation for the feat, and finally emit a sudden, incomplete crow, the reason for its incom-

pleteness being that the sound of its own voice would so startle the rooster that it would jump sideways about two feet. Naturally, this would cut the crow short. The rooster would look surprised, gradually regain possession of its startled faculties and its courage, and would cautiously begin preparations for another trial.

“That’s the way I felt when I was shooting at that fellow,” explained Dodd, “and it was just as hard to keep from jumping about eighteen feet the second time as it was the first. I shall always have a fellow feeling for that rooster after this. By the way, I’ll bet you never saw a hen that was scared by her own voice. No, sir. A hen just naturally talks up in a businesslike way, and takes it for granted that all creation is interested in what she has to say. But that isn’t a subject for general discussion in a mixed company, when a man wants to be polite — or wise.”

CHAPTER XXVI.

DODD'S PARTING DISSERTATION

DODD and Leonard sat on the porch smoking. In the shade of the house a carriage and a wagon waited to take the departing guests and their baggage to Neahtawanta. Mrs. Congrove, Miss Marsden, and Leonard were about to leave. Presently some farm-hands came, loaded the trunks on the wagon, and one of the men drove away with the load. The carriage would not start until later, and the ladies were still busy with their hand-baggage.

"It has been an eventful summer for me, Mr. Dodd," Leonard remarked, reflectively, "but, taken all in all, the happiest and most satisfactory I ever have known."

"It certainly has been eventful for all of us," conceded Dodd, with a note of regret at the parting in his tone.

"For my part," continued Leonard, "I lost everything and then found more."

"You found yourself," said Dodd.

"I found a wife — *the* wife," corrected Leonard.

"There are others," said Dodd, and his eyes twinkled momentarily.

"*The* wife for me," insisted Leonard; "the one girl in all the world. That is the great find that makes all losses too insignificant for even a thought."

"You found yourself, your real self," repeated Dodd.

"Yes, of course," admitted Leonard. "I know what you mean, and it's a fine thing for any man to find himself that way, but by comparison —"

"You had to find yourself before you could find the wife," interrupted Dodd; "that is, such a wife. You mean well, but you figure from effect to cause instead of from cause to effect."

"I think that finding the girl helped me to find myself," laughed Leonard, "but I won't argue the question; I'm satisfied to have found both. Now, I am going to take her back to her aunt's, escort my prospective sister-in-law to Chicago, tackle my new job, get well enough accustomed to it to be sure that I am fairly started, and then go back for the bride. I must know how and where I stand, but, if work —"

"Oh, you're all right," Dodd broke in. "Any one who can learn how to work — just merely how to work — as quickly and easily as you did is in

no danger of failure. What are Mrs. Congrove's plans?"

"She will live quietly among her old friends in a Chicago suburb," answered Leonard. "She will have enough for that, and the same suburb will suit me."

"What suburb is it?" asked Dodd.

"I've forgotten the name," replied Leonard, "but it suits me because it suits Jessie. Of course, she'll come when I tell her I'm ready," he hastened to add, "but don't you think it's a wise plan for a fellow to put himself in a position to ask her to come where her only sister is?"

"It's a plan," said Dodd, emphatically, "that shows real genius."

"And I shall have her there before Christmas, unless I disagree with my new employer, which seems impossible under the circumstances, for he knows all about me, and I'll work hard," continued Leonard. "We want to be conservative, — that is, Jessie and I do. Don't you think it's conservative for us to wait so long?"

"For people in your position," answered Dodd, "it is wonderfully conservative."

Leonard nodded his gratification at this endorsement (for his previous worldliness seemed utterly

lacking in this affair), and relapsed into silence. It was Dodd who finally spoke again.

"I am glad that things have turned out so satisfactorily for you," he remarked, "because it makes me feel mean to be the only lucky one, and I've had some additional good news myself to-day."

"What?" asked Leonard.

"Well, I told you about that Dutton note, didn't I?"

"Yes."

"And the draft he made on the Chicago commission man?"

"Yes."

"Well, that draft was paid after he had sent the telegram I wrote for him. I tell you, there are times when men have to be handled without gloves. If I could handle them that way for myself as well as I do for other people, I'd be rich."

"No doubt about it," assuaged Leonard, "but I'm delighted that the draft has been paid."

"So am I."

"If you had to meet the note yourself —"

"Oh, I wasn't thinking of that so much."

"What were you thinking of?"

"Why," whimsically, "my great feeling of relief arises from the fact that I won't have to tell Mrs. Dodd what a fool I was. Still, by balancing my

books for the summer, I might be able to convince her that it pays to be clever."

"Where's the dividend?" asked Leonard.

"Dake Wakeley went out of his way to tell me there were people trespassing on my property, — the first time he ever has been known to raise a finger for any man, — and the Indians followed me when they would turn for no one else," explained Dodd. "I'm getting a dividend out of that reward that just nicely puts me at the turning-point with the old farm. I'll probably never have to raise the price of the north half of it again to make things balance. You don't realize how much can be done on a place like this with a little ready money that you don't have to pay back. Yes, I really think that I could convince Mrs. Dodd that my policy, taken as a whole, is a wise one, but," with a sigh of relief, "I'm glad I don't have to try. You never can tell what a woman will remember that you have forgotten. I — Ah, here come the ladies."

Dodd motioned the man with the carriage to drive up, and then, with his old-fashioned courtesy and quaint comments, helped them to their seats. He was not going to drive them over himself this time, some matters connected with the farm requiring his attention.

"We shall hope to see you up here again," he

said, and Mrs. Dodd, emerging from the house just then, nodded her approval.

"We'll surely come," Leonard assured him.

Dodd looked at Miss Marsden.

"Oh, Ralph's 'we' includes me from now on, of course," she said, brightly, "but you really ought not to be quite so inaccessible, Mr. Dodd. A Chicago boat stopping at Old Mission once a week, or a trip by boat and carriage from Traverse City, leave you just a little out of reach. There ought to be a trolley line from Traverse City to the end of the peninsula."

Dodd leaned forward and spoke confidentially.

"There's going to be one," he said.

"When?" she asked, in surprise.

"After the next panic," replied Dodd.

They all looked rather bewildered, and finally Leonard remarked, with a laugh, that he didn't see what a panic had to do with a trolley line in that locality.

"A panic," said Dodd, "brings men back to earth, and they begin to look around for good, safe investments, while a long term of prosperity leads them in search of fabulous profits. The road already has been planned, and it is conceded that it will pay, but capital is too much interested just now in large fictional profits to give any attention to

small, real profits. Every paper you pick up presents the allurements of wonderful enterprises that pay, or will pay, from twenty-five to one hundred per cent., and every man with a little money or a lot of money has some plan of his own in mind or in sight that makes a safe five, seven, or even ten per cent. look like a mere waste of capital. But after a panic it is different. The money saved is hoarded for a time, and, when brought out for investment, it wants something safe and reasonable, — something that is tangible and represents real progress. Paper fortunes cease to be satisfactory."

"I never associated panics with progress before," remarked Leonard, with a puzzled smile, "but I see the truth of your contention. The money goes to the stock market in flush times."

"It sounds a little better to say," returned Dodd, "that most of it goes into speculation instead of investments. Then comes the panic, as a natural result, and for a time afterward money goes into investments instead of speculation. Investment means progress; speculation means retrogression. We forget this for a time in the excitement of pleasurable dreams, but always find it out when we wake up."

"Then," said Leonard, "if we had no panics, we would have no real progress."

"That is rather a crude way of putting it," returned Dodd. "Why not say that, if we would only be satisfied with real progress, we would have no panics? That is the truth. Panics are the direct result of the avariciousness of man, — not of the individual man but of the collective man. I expect to see the trolley road up here pretty soon now."

"Why do you say that?"

"Too many people are making too much money — on paper, and after a little they'll find that the paper can be sold only at pound rates to the rag-man. So I am giving you the very best advice of a pretty long life of reasonable activity when I say, 'Invest, but don't speculate.'"

Leonard could not repress a humorous impulse to ask under which head marriage came.

"Both," replied Dodd, promptly. "The elopement of a couple of half-baked youngsters, after a ten-days' summer-resort flirtation is a speculation; the marriage of two people with the sense to look soberly into the future is an investment. As an investment marriage pays in happiness and content at a really fabulous per cent.; as a speculation it may pay in anything, but it pays in misery more frequently than in anything else."

"Dan'l," said Mrs. Dodd, "you're preaching."

Dodd looked startled. Then, in his whimsical way: "Here endeth the first lesson."

As the carriage went down the drive, he called after it: "I've held you so long that you'll have to hurry to catch the boat. For my own pleasure, I hope you miss it and have to come back."

Dodd could certainly say a clever thing in an unusual way.

THE END.

L. C. Page and Company's Announcement List of New Fiction

The Bright Face of Danger. By Robert Neilson Stephens, author of "Philip Winwood," "A Gentleman Player," "The Mystery of Murray Davenport," etc. Illustrated by H. C. Edwards.

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"Mr. Stephens has fairly outdone himself. We thank him heartily. The story is nothing if not spirited and entertaining, rational and convincing. If there were more stories like it, the historical novel would be in no danger of falling into disrepute." — *Boston Transcript*.

"Mr. Stephens has a liberal share of the intangible verve and charm of Dumas, and he is at his best in 'The Bright Face of Danger.' It is a gay, dashing, youthful tale of dangers dire and escapes gallantly won. The situations are combined in fresh and captivating style. Things are kept moving swiftly, and the dénouement is effective." — *Chicago-Record Herald*.

The Prisoner of Mademoiselle. By Charles

G. D. Roberts, author of "The Kindred of the Wild,"
"Barbara Ladd," "The Heart of the Ancient Wood."

Library 12mo, cloth, gilt top, with a frontispiece by

Frank T. Merrill \$1.50

In this charming tale Mr. Roberts has come back to the field of his first novels, — the land of Acadia. He tells a story which, although by no means a nature story, still has plenty of those vibrant nature-notes which have endeared his "Barbara Ladd" to its readers. Add to that scenes of tenseness and thrill which surpass those in "The Forge in the Forest," and one can see that here is a romance worth the name.

The Watchers of the Trails. By Charles G.

D. Roberts, author of "Barbara Ladd," "The Kindred of the Wild," etc. With illustrations by Charles Livingston Bull.

Square 12mo, decorative cover \$2.00

This is a companion volume to "The Kindred of the Wild," and is another collection of Professor Roberts's characteristic stories of nature and animal life, which stand alone in the world of fiction as absolutely sincere and truthful descriptions of existence in the untamed wilderness. They carry one far from the haunts of convention into the very depths of primeval forces, and present the savage instincts of the beasts of the forests and the elemental problems of living which attend those who live near to nature.

The book is sure to meet the favor accorded its predecessor and companion, of which a few of the criticisms are:

"Professor Roberts has caught wonderfully the elusive individualities of which he writes. His animal stories are marvels of sympathetic science and literary exactness. Bound with the superb illustrations by Charles Livingston Bull, they make a volume which charms, entertains, and informs." — *New York World*.

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"No more perfect achievement of its kind has come from the hand of man." — *Chicago Tribune*.

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At Home with the Jardines. By Lillian Bell,
author of "Abroad with the Jimmies," "Hope Loring," etc.

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Here we have the heroine of "Abroad with the Jimmies" (a book already established in the minds of readers as one of the author's best) back to America, married, and trying to settle down. This book relates her experiences as a honeymooner, a flat-dweller, a housekeeper, and a hostess. Among her guests — as well as counsellors and friends — are her (and the reader's) old friends, the Jimmies, and her vivacious sister, Bee. These and a score of others — of whom the most prominent are Mary Jane, a new type of domestic, and "The Angel" — make up a pleasing group of folk with whom to pass a genial hour or so.

Of "Abroad with the Jimmies," the following are but a few of a great many favorable opinions:

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"Full of ozone, of snap, of ginger, of swing and momentum." — *Chicago Evening Post*.

"... Is one of her best and cleverest novels . . . filled to the brim with amusing incidents and experiences. This vivacious narrative needs no commendation to the readers of Miss Bell's well-known earlier books. They will all read it, and they will enjoy it, and that is one of the safest prophecies we have made for some time." — *N. Y. Press*.

The Sign of Triumph. A Romance of the Children's Crusade. By Sheppard Stevens, author of "I Am the King." Illustrated by H. C. Edwards.

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This is a romantic story, dealing with the incidents of the Children's Crusade, and depicts the pathetic experiences of that army of infant martyrs to the cause of religion. Interwoven with this account is a delightful romance.

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The Green Diamond. By Arthur Morrison, author of "The Red Triangle," etc.

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"The Red Triangle" proved to be one of the most popular of the year's fiction. "Better than 'Sherlock Holmes,'" "Not to be laid down till the last word has been reached," "A first-class story of crime and mystery," are a few of the observations made upon it. This new story promises to be of equal popularity.

It deals with the adventures of a famous diamond, "The Green Eye of Goona," mysteriously stolen from an Indian rajah, and supposedly concealed in one of a dozen magnums of Tokay wine. An enterprising young Englishman, Harvey Crook, is the principal seeker for the diamond, and proves himself a worthy disciple of Martin Hewitt and Sherlock Holmes.

Hemming, the Adventurer. By Theodore Roberts. With six illustrations by A. G. Learned.

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An Evans of Suffolk. By Anna Farquhar, author of "Her Boston Experiences," "Her Washington Experiences," etc.

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This is a powerful story of modern life. The principal character is a young woman who marries into a conservative Boston family without explaining her antecedents, and is obliged to exercise all her woman's ingenuity to keep unknown the existence of her father, who is the "black sheep" of a distinguished English family. She gradually becomes involved in deception, which grows more and more difficult to maintain, and which threatens to finally overwhelm her. The plot is strong, and the telling is brilliant, while the book has much of the author's gift of social satire, which was so cleverly displayed in "Her Boston Experiences."

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